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Rambles and recollections of a fly-fishe



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Rev. W. Cartwright

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RAMBLES AND RECOLLECTIONS  
OF A FLY-FISHER



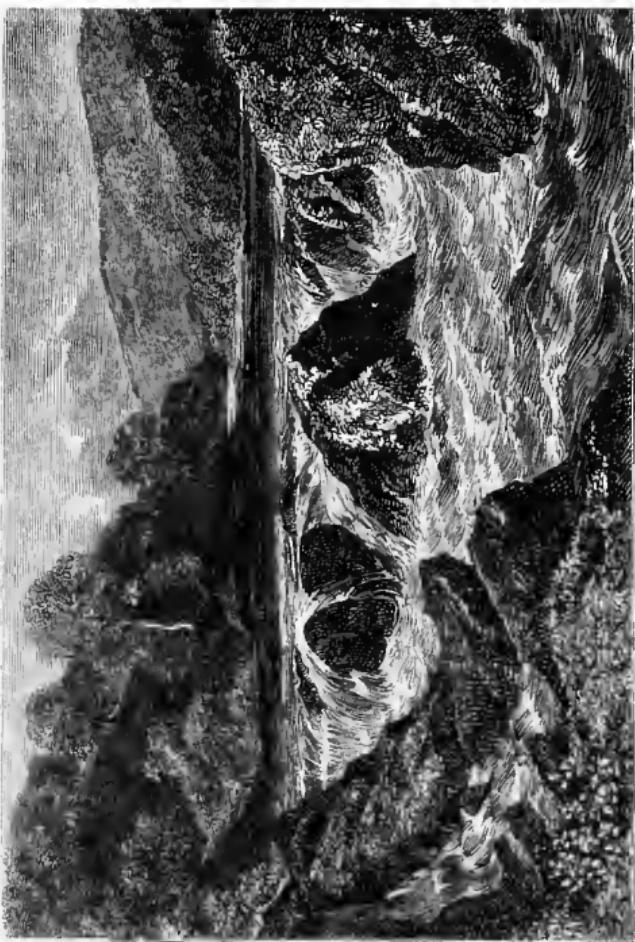


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“THIS NOBLE RIVER.”

# Rambles and Recollections of a Fly-Fisher

ILLUSTRATED.

WITH AN APPENDIX  
CONTAINING AMPLE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOVICE,  
INCLUSIVE OF FLY-MAKING, AND A LIST  
OF REALLY USEFUL FLIES.

By CLERICUS. *pseud*  
Cartwright, William



LONDON:  
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TO HIS FRIEND  
THE REV. JOHN EAGLES, M.A.

AS A SMALL, THOUGH VERY SINCERE, TOKEN OF HIS ESTEEM,

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.

N launching his little book on the uncertain tide of public opinion, the author is fully conscious it cannot but be amenable to many defects. He humbly hopes, however, he may be excused for claiming in its behalf *one merit*; (if it can be so called;) viz. that the scenes and anecdotes it contains, with the substance of the dialogues, are not only not imaginative, but as compatible with the strictest veracity, as the distance of time that has intervened since they chiefly occurred, would reasonably admit of.

Had he felt there was insufficient in the simple tale every fly-fisher has to tell of his past experience of the “gentle art” to interest the reader, without the aid of fiction to embellish it, he for one would not have adventured a single line on the subject.

In conformity with the matter-of-fact contents of the following pages, the author will scarcely perhaps be required to apologise for the term “*Piscator*,” former writers and lovers of the same art have made use of, being adopted by him, inasmuch as it is one with which he is most familiar in addressing the frequent companion of his piscatorial rambles.

If the reader should be induced by aught that meets his eye here to linger a little longer than usual, as a fly-fisher or sketcher, in the enjoyment of the sweet scenery of his own favoured country ; it will be ample compensation to the author to know, that the latter must not only rise immeasurably in his estimation, but that time so spent will never be regretted by him as spent in vain.

CLERICUS.

*Redland,*

Feb. 5th, 1853.

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## CORRIGENDA.

Page 4, for "stream. You," read "stream—you,"  
15, for "we believe," read "I believe."  
23, for "to us," read "to me,"  
27, for "instruction, some river," read "instruction. Some  
river"  
49, for "supper-time, I want," read "supper-time, and I  
want."  
60, for "conquering reel," read "conquering wheel."  
83, for "rambles, &c. with the same river," read "rambles  
and recollections, &c."  
111, after "puzzled brain," insert a comma.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

“ **F**ROM morn till noon his light assiduous toil  
The Angler plied ; and when the mid-day sun  
Was high in heaven, under a spreading tree  
(Methinks I hear the hum amid its leaves !)  
Upon a couch of wild-flowers down we sat  
With healthful palates to our flight repast  
Of biscuits, and of cheese, and bottled milk ;  
The sward our table, and the boughs our roof.”

DELTA.

**P**LEASANT days were those, Piscator, when we commenced rambling together rod in hand through the fair fields that fringe the Wye, the Arrow, and the Dore.\* The first, rightly indeed called a river—the noblest of its kind ! the second, hardly deserving the name,

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\* The Wye needs no description, so universally must it be known. The Arrow rises almost on the borders of

though rapid in its flow and ravishing to the eye of a fly-fisher ! the third a mere brook, so narrow as you approach within a few miles of its source as to raise your involuntary wonder how a trout of any size could condescend to grace it with his presence. And yet what slaughter have our busy hands been guilty of far up this little streamlet ; and how often have our shoulders told feelingly enough of the number and size of our victims, as we crawled up the first tiresome hill on our return home.

The stream of Time has flowed on since then as surely, if not as noisily as this little brook, and carried us far on our way to that shoreless sea that awaits every mortal voyager. A serious, solemn thought ! and little akin (some one perhaps might allege) to the subject we commenced with.—It is here, Piscator, here I must confess to the fact of being at variance with this imaginary somebody, though sorry not to be at peace with all.

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Herefordshire and Radnorshire, not far from Michaelchurch, a Chapelry of Kington. After somewhat of a circuitous course it joins the *Lug* in the neighbourhood of Leominster. The *Dore* first makes its appearance a mile or two above Dorston, and after the accession of the *Worm* at Kenderchurch, runs into the *Monnow* a little below Pontrilas.

If life were indeed intended to be like one uninterrupted roll of the drum that calls the soldier to the clash of arms, with no breathing-time for ought of a less sombre character; how could I forbear acquiescing in the notion not a few entertain, that no smile should ever play upon the countenance; no glance of delight ever sparkle in the eye; no mirthful word drop spontaneously from the tongue?

But surely there is not an atom that helps to make up the sum total of created things, that is not designed by the hand of the Creator for an especial end! Shall man, then, the noblest of God's works, who is endowed by Him with peculiar faculties, be entirely debarred the favourite food each one requires?—The Painter, for instance, who is gifted with a head to conceive and a ready hand to execute;—shall he throw down his brush and withhold from the canvass the happiest results of such a combination, because a higher work stands by awaiting his undivided attention? Shall the Poet pause in the midst of his melting numbers, and the dying cadence tremble half-sung upon his lips; because there is a far nobler theme that should entrance his whole soul? To descend still lower, shall the Florist desist from the summer joys

that delight his eyes, and occupy his hands, because the favourites of his choice bloom not for ever, like the flowers he reads of above? Ay, Piscator, and shall you no longer sally forth in the early days of spring to ply your favourite art in the sparkling stream. You, more especially because you have undertaken the serious, solemn office of being a fisher of men?

One of the same cloth with yourself, I protest I see not the matter in the same light as this; though I admit it to be a fair subject to differ on.

Oh! how I love the sweet country!—to ramble on when the wild flowers are so fragrant, and the melody of the hedge-row warblers so gladsome! Still, the honey that is sweetest will pall upon the taste, and the rarest beauty cease to captivate for ever. And if there be a sameness in the loveliest of things and sweetest that is wearisome, can we expect an exception in the sober routine of every-day duties? We cannot force the strength of our reluctant hands, or command the flow of our unwilling thoughts, if they fail us in our usual demands. And if the entire throwing off, as it were, of the load that presses upon our shoulders day after day be indispensable, who, dear Piscator, shall begrudge

you and me our favourite mode of doing so, provided we trespass not against morality and religion ?

That a taste like ours is no less trifling than cruel has, I know, been alleged over and over again. Trifling it may be in one sense ! but what of amusement on this side the grave, if too closely analyzed, is not amenable to the same charge ?

Much has been said of the Master Cynic of old, who sat in the sunshine all the day long, and chuckled over the foibles of his fellows ; pluming himself, no doubt, on his superior wisdom in *doing* nothing ! If Diogenes has long since disappeared, he has left disciples who largely partake of his disposition, though they have different modes of showing it.

We hear of the Age of Gold, of Brass, of Iron. It is to be hoped the present may be called by no harder name still ! such a straining at gnats and swallowing of camels, seems to be the order of the day. To think, Piscator, that the chosen amusement of our beloved father, the immortal Izaak, should be condemned as trifling !—the good old man, from whose lips no kindlier sentiments ever flowed than when exhilarated by the balmy air, and delighted with God's works around him, he

rambled along the banks of the streams he loved to frequent.\*

And not only trifling but cruel ! So says the noble bard (by inference at least) in his memorable couplet. Fit judge indeed of cruelty ! Perhaps there is no stronger evidence of ignorance and presumption in another, than to hear him volunteer a decided opinion on a subject he can know nothing about. How few reflect when they charge the angler with cruelty, how closely, if not absolutely, they trench upon the semblance of the like charge, in the case of Him who said to Peter,—“Go thou to the sea and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up ?” If ought that was unusual attended this mode of fishing, such as our dainty accusers do not hesitate to allege, would our Lord thus directly have commanded his disciple to practise it ? Again, the

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\* “ We seldom take the name of God into our mouths but it is either to praise Him or to pray to Him : if others use it vainly in the midst of their recreations, so vainly as if they meant to conjure, I must tell you it is neither our fault nor our custom ; we protest against it. But pray remember I accuse nobody ; for as I would not make a watery discourse, so I would not put too much vinegar into it ; nor would I raise the reputation of my own art by the diminution or ruin of another’s.”

IZAAK WALTON.

names of the most distinguished and benevolent of men\* might be quoted, whose delight it was to haunt the streams from time to time as our custom is—men, too, unsurpassed in the varied walks of literature, philosophy, and science—men of strong minds and undoubted honesty, whom no casuistry would have induced to ply their favourite art another moment, if they felt it was at the expense of the undue sufferings of a poor dumb animal.

Be pleased to remember I am advocating Fly-fishing only—a very different thing from angling for hours with a worm, which I confess has no charms for me.

If a trout be intended for our food (and who can doubt it who has ever tasted one fresh, and firm and pink?) I am at a loss to know, how its sufferings are at all likely to be greater when taken by a fly-fisher than in a net. A cold-blooded animal, it is very certain there is less of nervous sensibility connected with it than in the case of a warm-blooded one. This has been proved over and over again to the entire conviction of the most stubborn of sceptics, when he witnessed how eagerly

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\* Need I mention other names than those of Paley, Nelson, Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, Sir Humphrey Davy, Benjamin West, and Coleridge?

the same trout rose and was caught with a fly he had lately carried away sticking fast in his mouth.\*

What worthy brother of the craft would ever think of capturing a fish without putting an immediate end to its existence by a sharp blow on the edge of his basket, or the butt end of his rod? Whereas the contents of a net cast higgledy pigglely on the shore—who has not witnessed with regret the poor creatures gasping by degrees their life away?

Oh! if I thought I was putting one of God's creatures to torture for my diversion, I would instantly throw my favourite rod into the fire, with all the feathers and hackles I have been accumulating for years, though it would, I know, torture me to do so. But so convinced am I that I do nothing of the kind, when the smiling Spring beckons me away to the pleasant streams; that I am anxious to recommend my favourite amusement to all (more especially) of my own cloth, to whom the country is dear with its sweet accompaniments.

Ye reverend brethren of mine (that is, if any of you will condescend to glance at these pages) who

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\* See Sir H. Davy's "Salmonia," than which there is no more delightful book on this subject.

fish for rest, entire rest of mind and body ;—I can conceive no more charming panacea for your real or imaginary troubles, than a few weeks' rambling, such as I would recommend, with a fishing-rod in your hand, and a sketch-book, if you please, in your pocket.\* You know how dark the clouds are that occasionally track our steps down the path of duty we have to pursue. The scenes we must continually witness—how sickening to the heart that has any feeling for the wants and woes of others ! the volume of human nature that is ever before our eyes, with every conceivable illustration of its sorrows and its sins—how painfully does it unfold to us every particular of its dismal story.

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\* “ I have made you idlers at home and abroad, but I hope to some purpose ; and, I trust, you will confess the time bestowed upon angling has not been thrown away. The most important principle perhaps in life is to have a pursuit—a useful one, if possible, and at all events an innocent one. And the scenes you have enjoyed—the contemplations to which they have led, and the exercise in which we have indulged, have, I am sure, been very salutary to the body, and, I hope, to the mind. I have always found a peculiar effect from this kind of life ; it has appeared to bring me back to early times and feelings, and to create again the hopes and happiness of youthful days.”

SIR H. DAVY.

If we dared repeat half we hear, or disclose half we see, how much of the tinsel would be stripped off society's gilded surface.—To read the marriage-service to youthful ears, that will hear in it no syllable that seals not for the future the unalloyed happiness the present hour so plentifully provides—and then to be called off to repeat, with scarcely a moment's breathing-time, to ears no less youthful, the sad, sad words, “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust”—the knell, it may be, to a lorn mother's heart, how cruelly the Destroyer has robbed her of her firstborn treasure;—such is no infrequent scene we have to bear a prominent part in.

And then the same beaten track of our every-day duties—our close confinement to one particular locality—the constant application that is necessary to studies connected with our profession; and last, though not least, the difficulty of writing week after week (greater now I believe than ever) to keep even pace with the growing intelligence of the people; all this, I can assure you, good reader, is no trifle.

That there are sunny intervals to cheer us, when we have reason to conclude our efforts in our Master's cause have not been quite unattended with success, I am free to confess. Still, if any

stand in need of entire relaxation occasionally, I feel sure no active member of my cloth ought to be excluded from the number.

As weak as other men, physically as well as mentally, entire change of scene and employment is no less indispensable to us. And though perhaps pleasure and profit may be combined to a far greater extent in a month's visit to other shores in the study of men and manners ; travelling, we must not forget, in its cheapest form, is an expensive recreation—too much so, I fear, for the narrow pockets of the Clergy in general. Accustomed for some years past, to leave home (no unhappy one by the way) for the last week in May, and the whole of June, not the least tranquil hours of my life have been spent amid Nature's most secluded retreats, on the banks of some mountain-torrent, or babbling brook, or majestic river.

Oh ! how rapidly do the winged hours fly, when the eye, the hand, the foot, have full occupation.\* The miles we travel then over hill and

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\* What a pitiable object is a man at a fashionable watering-place, with nothing to do but to walk up and down, up and down with the crowd on some favourite lounging-place, with no variation but a periodical peep at the Papers, or a dish of gossip served up to him well seasoned with vinegar and pepper.

dale, mountain and moor ; can they be of the ordinary dimensions we have been so long accustomed to ? surely, most surely, they must be shorn of their due proportions ? And the cares too that have kept us so anxious by day, and sleepless at night,—where are they now ? Borne on the wings of the bracing breeze, or melted away in the charming sunshine ! A total change seems to come over us ; endowed with the new-born strength of young giants ;—confident we can grapple successfully with difficulties, that of late seemed impracticable ; buoyant, as a bird on the wing ; whence the marvellous revolution in our feelings, that clothes everything we see or do in such roseate hues ?

Health and exercise, good reader, is the magic means by which we can thus climb up far, far above the murky atmosphere of our old aches and pains, and leave for a while this troublesome world of ours behind us. And the road to the one is embraced, I feel assured, in great measure, in the intimate companionship of the other.

To put you in the same way I have so successfully trodden myself, of securing the most invaluable of earthly blessings, is my chief reason for venturing to obtrude my feeble and inexperienced pen on the notice of the public.

Hundreds, I know, would gladly follow my example, were they not deterred by the difficulties they imagine to be inseparable from the art of Fly-fishing. It will, then, be my endeavour in the following pages, to show, that these difficulties have no existence ; and that Fly-fishing would be as easy to all, who desire to practise it, as it is indeed associated with a thousand innocent pleasures to those who do.

Although no great master of the art, I know quite enough of it, to clothe every hour of a month's sojourn in the most retired of spots, with such tranquil enjoyment, as to make me always look forward to its annual recurrence with unfeigned pleasure. Rarely, if ever, coming up to my friend Piscator, (who I suspect has a dash of otter's blood in his veins,) when the speckled beauties are brought up for our inspection at the end of the day, I generally secure quite sufficient sport in this way, to keep up the interest of a long day's walk.

An innocent, healthful, happy recreation, I have invariably found it ; and if, kind reader, you will have patience to accompany me through the following pages, I am not without a confident hope, that I shall succeed in inducing you to try your hand at it also.



## CHAPTER II.

“ The well dissembled fly,  
The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring  
Snatch'd from the hoary steed the floating line,  
And all thy slender wat'ry stores prepare.”

THOMSON.

**H**OW often when I first commenced fishing with flies that looked irresistible, when they left the shop-keeper's hands, have I been sorely mortified to find them, after a few throws, “ *minus* ” a wing ; or perhaps with the hackle completely unravelled. Of course, if you buy your flies of parties you know and can trust, you will be in little danger of finding yourself in a similar predicament. But it is not always you have this opportunity, and then you must take what you can get.

Let me earnestly recommend you, if you are a novice, to learn to make your own flies. You

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will at first find it an awkward business, not only from its novelty, but from the distrust you will naturally feel in yourself, in grappling with a difficulty so unnecessarily magnified in books you may have read on the subject. But when you have accomplished one fly, and, still more, killed a trout with it, there is little fear of your succeeding ever after to your heart's content.

Now, many will tell you that a rough, unsightly fly is as good for your purpose, if not better, than the neatest that was ever made. I believe this to be a complete fallacy. It is very true, that an experienced hand, who has never tied a fly in his life otherwise than in a rough manner, is a deadly enemy to the finny race. But am I to be told that he would not be equally deadly, if not more so, if his flies were tied in the neatest possible manner? Because you are directed to make—say a palmer, (which, by the way, though called a fly, is neither more nor less than a hairy caterpillar that falls, we believe, curled up on the water, and is thus represented on a hook,) are you to make a point of winding the hackle so irregularly, that the fibres should point different ways? Is it not better to try and imitate nature as closely as possible, (alas! how sadly do the most skilful of us fail in

this respect !) by winding the hackle with such care, as to take the same direction ?

If I am not mistaken in my views respecting a palmer, there is no fear of my being so in the ordinary flies it is customary to make.

Take a May-fly—the one, perhaps, the best known, in your hands, and examine it well. Oh ! how dazzling in beauty, and delicate in form does it spring from Nature's incomparable mould ! How vain the attempt to imitate its gauze-like wings—the brilliancy of its prominent eyes—the matchless grace of its slender body ! What then ! Are you to give up the attempt in despair because of this impossibility ? Just as reasonably may the painter cast his brush away, and thrust his canvas into the fire, because, excel as he may, he falls so wondrously short of the lovely scene that fires his soul. No, you are not to give up the attempt—you are to do your best.

Endeavour to tie your flies as neatly as you can, and imitate as closely as possible the natural ones, in colour, shape, and proportions, though the latter should, I think, be reduced in the case of large flies.

And here I cannot help saying a few words, though with some degree of hesitation, as they

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must be in opposition to those of a certain Professor, of no mean notoriety, on the subject of his “non-imitation theory.”

Though many years have passed, since I filled the lowly position of an Oxford Under-graduate, I have not quite forgotten that, if there was one name in the whole vocabulary of our vernacular that inspired me with especial awe, it was that of Professor. What a giant in intellectual attainments did I infer the proud possessor of such a name must necessarily be! And though it has become more common now, (as the first street you enter in a town of any pretensions will give you an opportunity of seeing, if you will only examine the plates on the doors,) I have not quite lost every vestige of my old feelings. If, then, I presume to differ with the learned man in question, it will, I trust, be in a manner that will not infringe upon my respect for him.

Without quoting his words on Bacon’s definition of simulation and dissimulation, the worthy Professor boldly strikes out, by alleging that “there is, in truth, little or no connection between the art of angling and the science of entomology; and therefore the success of the angler, in by far the greater proportion of cases, does not depend on

the resemblance which subsists between his artificial fly and the natural insect." And again he says, "that in nine cases out of ten a fish seizes upon an artificial fly as upon an insect or moving creature '*sui generis*,' and not on account of its exact and successful resemblance to any accustomed or familiar object."

These assertions are made, I believe, chiefly on the ground of the utter want of resemblance of artificial Salmon-flies to any "creature that lives, and moves, and has its being."

Now, gentle reader, with your permission, I will leave Salmon-flies out of the question, as I am expressly engaged in writing on the subject of flies I wish to recommend you to make, and use to the cost of the unhappy trout.

That palmers may be used on ordinary occasions throughout the season, I do not deny; but even these general favourites are neglected by the finny tribe, when flies of some large class begin to swarm upon the water. The truth of this I have experienced myself over and over again.

The large "*dark blue*," for instance, the first fly that can be called a killer—how often have I taken trout after trout with an artificial one I selected from my book which appeared to me the most

like it. More than this ;—how often also have I failed to “*rise*” a single fish, when the likeness to the above fell short, as far as the colour was concerned. If, then, I see a fly upon the water eagerly seized, and I pick out its likeness (in my opinion at least) from a hundred others, and find it instantly succeed ; what becomes in this case of the Professor’s “non-imitation theory ?” I am speaking (be it remembered) of flies common to the rivers of the south and west of England, and not of those in the north—though the principle, I contend, holds good in either case.

Again, when the March-brown is well on the water, you may as well throw your hat there with a chance of catching fish, as any other fly. It is true you may get a sulky “*rise*” or two at a palmer, but, in nine cases out of ten, the March-brown the fish will have, or none at all. Now, suppose in this case you were to follow the Professor’s advice, and substitute for the fly you consider most like the one on the water, some fancy fly of an opposite colour, (“*Sam Slick*,” for instance, or “*Long Tom*”—no very elegant names the Professor will admit, though he elsewhere calls angling “*an elegant amusement*,”) and you found the latter utterly rejected, while the former killed fish after fish, would it not prove it to be erroneous ?

How well do I remember a case in point while fishing many years ago in the Wye, which I began “*flogging*” at about ten in the morning and continued doing so until twelve with very little success. When lo ! all at once, the river seemed perfectly alive with fish ; though it was very mortifying, I can tell you, to find that not one of them would notice my flies. At length I did succeed in landing a trout that rose at me, evidently with much doubt, though sufficiently in earnest to enable me to strike and secure him before he discovered his mistake. In pressing his gullet out dropped a pellet composed entirely of “*grannams*.”\* I no sooner saw this than I put on, not one only, but two “*grannams*” with a “*cochabonddu*” in the centre. By half-past one o’clock (a little under three-quarters of an hour) I filled my basket, which is no small one, to the brim, chiefly with trout and grayling. Not satisfied with this I returned home (about ten minutes’ walk) to unload ; and within the next hour I had to retrace my steps to do the same again. Slaughter such as this, within two hours, I have never witnessed before or since ! A

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\* Some years have passed since this happened, still I feel pretty sure the fly was a “*grannam*.”

memorable event in the annals of my fly-fishing career, it completely undermines the novel notion the Professor assumes, viz. "of fishing with flies which differ in colour and appearance from those which prevail upon the water."

Once more, let any reader who has had the good fortune to be plying the gentle art when the May-fly was well on the water, tell me of what use its opposite in the artificial way, in colour, shape, and size would have been? Not seldom within my remembrance have I gone on killing trout after trout with a fly of this class, when others without it have fished the same water, often ahead of me, with very indifferent success.

I am free to admit that the neatest fly that was ever made falls miserably short of the beautiful insects the fly-fisher is so conversant with. Still, if you examine a well-made fly in such a manner as it is presented to a fish looking up at it, it is not so very unlike a natural one as to be amenable to the Professor's ridicule. I have proved this over and over again by exhibiting one to ladies and children, and hearing from their lips the remark that "it certainly is very like a fly."

That a servile imitation of a natural fly is necessary, I by no means assert. On the contrary,

though a trout will dart from a great depth and seize a gnat of the minutest size, I do not find, if he is at all hungry, he is disinclined to refuse an artificial fly, if in colour, shape, and size it be in imitation of one on the water, though in the eyes of the Professor so marvellously little like. I have no doubt at all that there is just sufficient resemblance in a well-made artificial fly to a natural one, if properly managed, to tempt a trout to try the taste of it. Hence it follows that slightly stained or ruffled water is all in favour of aiding the deception.

That any new and strange notion (the newer and stranger the better) will enlist plenty of disciples in its favour, I have only to search the annals of quackery, and that not only in matters of medicine, but of everything else. Have you forgotten how a few years ago the vaunted efficacy of brandy and salt as a remedy was to stop for the future the doctor's visits, (what a blessing you will exclaim !) and cure every ailment under the sun ? That a few persons of nervous temperament tried it, in full reliance on its virtues, and received benefit, (not from the mixture, but from the confidence they felt in it re-acting in a beneficial way on their nerves, and inducing them to bestir themselves more than usual,) I do not deny :

—any more than I am inclined to deny that the believer in the Professor's theory may tempt a few trout to their ruin by the persevering employment of "Sam Slick," or "Long Tom." It would be a great treat to us, however, to see him fish fairly in the same water with his favourites side by side with friend Piscator in the height of the May-fly season. If he did not at the end of the day devoutly wish the Professor and his quackery (I mean it in no offensive sense) had never been introduced to his acquaintance, I would almost undertake to swallow them all put together at a mouthful, with "Sam Slick" and "Long Tom" into the bargain.

I forbear saying more on this subject for fear of exhausting your patience, which, if a sincere candidate for piscatorial renown, you will require in no small proportion. I would only add by way of conclusion that if any of the Professor's flies, with very inelegant names, prove at any time destructive, my own experience assures me that it is because they resemble (though it may be distantly) some fly on the water that trout have an especial relish for.

For your benefit, if you are a novice, I have furnished you with a list of flies in the Appendix,

which I have experienced to be really useful, confining it expressly to as narrow a scale as possible. Knowing them to be killers in their season I have the more pleasure in recommending them to your favour, perfectly sure that if you handle them properly you will find them killers too.

Armed with one of Copham's best rods, a reel, line, collar, and flies of the right sort, believe me, you would look more killing than when dressed in your best ball-room attire of incomparable cut. Looking a killing fellow and being one are, however, two different matters, as you will find to your cost when you first commence operations. Flourishing your little "*Copham*," as if you had a favourite whip in your hand, the first sound that meets your ear in all probability will be the loud crack you hear with such delight, when wielding the latter on the driving-box. Not at all alarmed, but on the contrary rather charmed with such music as this, you will persevere with true piscatorial patience, wondering, perhaps, no trout has the good taste to make your acquaintance. Till at length some mishap that stops your career, of entanglement, or what not, will reveal the melancholy truth, viz.—that for the last half-hour or more, you have been fishing "*minus*" all your flies.

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Now, though my principal aim is to divest fly-fishing, with all its accompaniments, of imaginary difficulties, and to make it as easy of attainment to you as I have found it myself; it is nevertheless an art, like everything else worth knowing, not to be acquired without attention, perseverance, and care.

Think not, then, because you have smacked off your flies, it is a hopeless case, though a dozen or two more share the same fate;—but rather take courage on being assured, that your present destructiveness is no bad omen of your future excellence. In handling a rod, the wrist should be the principal agent employed in propelling the line attached to it. And it is by too quick a turn of the wrist, before the whole of the line is expanded backwards, that the destruction of your flies is caused. If, then, you can hit off the exact moment, after a gentle sweep behind, to propel the line forwards, you will have learnt the true secret of good throwing. And it has, I believe, been often observed, that the tyro who is too cautious and slow ever to whisk off a fly, rarely, if ever, becomes a skilful brother of the craft.

The less heavily your flies drop on the water—

“ Like the fall of the rose-leaf  
We'll drop the light fly”—

the more will you imitate the motion of the fragile insects that are floating around you. Throw quickly ; ranging with care every likely hole and corner in the still deeps, as well as every eye and tail of the streams you frequent. Throw, as if your aim were at the distant shore ; suddenly checking your line, to make the flies fall in a light and natural manner upon the bosom of the water. When you see a fish rise and turn his head, which you will be able to do, if you keep a sharp look out, move your rod slightly up, or on one side, in order that the hook may take effect in his mouth, before he has time to eject it. This is called "*striking*"—a very necessary part of your business, I can assure you from experience.

Your flies should be ever on the move ; and as quickly as they fall upon the water, begin humouring them, by slightly checking their motion down the stream ; You are cautioned by some writers "never" to draw your flies against the stream ! Friend Piscator will, however, agree with me, I know, in giving you the opposite advice, and telling you to do so occasionally, though of course in an easy and very cautious manner. A fly struggling for life in the rushing water would naturally at times endeavour to flutter against the

current; and I believe this is the favourable moment the wary fish awaits, to enable him to make a successful onslaught. Consequently to draw your flies delicately against the stream at intervals is, in my humble opinion, by no means so unnatural as it is often represented.

I cannot conclude these remarks, without a word or two of advice, what kind of water you ought first to try your hand upon. Let it be of such a nature as will give you every favourable opportunity, that you can need, of acquiring real, practical instruction, some river well stocked with fish—not trout only, but every kind that will rise at a fly,—wide, open, and unencumbered with trees—is the volume, not of paper, but of water, I recommend you to learn your elementary lessons in.

Such a volume will amuse and instruct you to your heart's content, that is, if the latter be of the true Waltonian stamp.

Suppose you fix on the Wye to “*throw*” off in, (I believe you can select no better river for your purpose at the proper season of the year,) you will most probably wet your barbed steel in the blood of some bold little lastspring, that *will* come (throw as awkwardly as you may) if you put on a small

red hackle, or palmer sparkling with gold twist. Again and again will you find these plucky little fellows tugging at you with all their might and main, which is no trifle, considering their diminutive size.

When you have fairly killed about a dozen last-springs, you will, in all probability, fall in with a trout. Whether or not you make him your own, is another matter ;—certainly not, if you nervously strike too soon ; but if, with the eye of a lynx, you watch him taking in your fly, and then while turning away with it, you deliberately strike, as I have elsewhere instructed you ; you will assuredly hook him, or I know nothing of a prophet's veracity. If you find you have succeeded in hooking a fish of any size, bring him immediately you can under command, by winding up your line, and keeping your rod very little inclined from an upright position. Of course, if he be above the average dimensions, and begin to dash madly about, fighting gallantly for his life, you must not attempt to hold him with the line you have just shortened ;—but don't give him an inch more than you can help, and that with so reluctant a hold upon it, as it lies between your hand and the rod, that will gradually wear out his strength, while struggling

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hard to get away. When you see he is almost exhausted, draw him gently (keeping as much out of sight as possible) upon the shore.

If fishing from a high bank, you will perhaps require a landing-net under such circumstances (though I confess I rarely use one myself). There is generally some little nook or cranny, be the bank ever so steep, into which, if you have patience, you will be able to draw a tired trout. Take my advice, (I speak feelingly, having broken sundry tops from not acting up to it,) and never try to lift a trout of good size out of the water with your rod. With a slight plunge or two he would be sure to break his hold, or your tackle, and, if motionless, his dead weight would so strain your rod, as to make you repent the foolish attempt.

With a dozen or so of last springs, three or four trout, a grayling, and some few roach and chub in your basket, which the Wye will give you an opportunity of putting there—what more for a novice would you require? If you are not above taking good advice, making use of the ordinary senses you may be blessed with, I see no reason why you should not return home similarly furnished from the banks of the lovely Wye.

In case, however, you resemble an acquaintance of mine, who assured me, with a very knowing look, he could learn the most difficult as well as the easiest of arts, from farming to fly-fishing, within three months ; and in self-reliance despise the rudiments of the lesson I have taken such pains to instil upon you ; I should not be at all surprised if you were to follow the example of a friend Piscator is not unacquainted with, who did, after some days' continuous labour, contrive to hook a trout not much larger than a minnow ! Kindly as my brother Piscator interceded for the little captive, that it might live on a few months longer in the sparkling stream ;—it was all in vain. “ A fish is a fish,” exclaimed the proud captor, and at once deposited his prize in solitary grandeur in a most capacious basket he had flung round his shoulders.





“TRYING A CAST OR TWO.”



### CHAPTER III.

“ **A**ND where is he, the Angler by whose side  
That livelong day delightedly I roam'd,  
While life to both a funny pastime seem'd ?  
Ask of the winds that from the Atlantic blow  
When last they stirr'd the wild-flowers on his grave ! ”

DELTA.

**V**ERY good, very good indeed ! ” were the words that fell by no means musically, I must confess, upon my ears, as I was trying a cast or two for the first time upon the Wye that flowed within a few fields of my abode.

As to the words, there was nothing in them that was not sufficiently civil and encouraging ;—but spoken in so confident a tone as to betoken downright rudeness, or downright honesty, they induced me at once to turn round and scrutinize the speaker. Tall, upright, hard-featured, with a

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non-descript kind of cap on his head, half-military, half “*Monkeyish*,” a jacket of all colours that are dingy, save the original one ; and inexpressibles—oh ! what would a spinster of respectable years say of the wondrous patchwork ?—an enormous rod in his hand, and as enormous a basket in proportion flung round his shoulders—very like Robinson Crusoe in the eyes of Friday, I imagine, did the individual who spoke appear to me. Such in fact was his trim, such his equipments in the fishing way, that had I suddenly come across him on some moonlight night, I should have taken him at once for a poacher of the desperate school bent on mischief.

That I was never more mistaken in my life, the following colloquy will abundantly show :—

*Stranger.* You handle your rod, sir, as if you knew something about fly-fishing.

*Clericus.* Why, my good man, to tell you the honest truth, I have fished so little of late that I was just trying a few throws when you came up to see what sort of a hand I might make of it.

*Stranger.* No fear of your success, sir ; fly-fishing is like swimming, once learnt never forgotten. There was some talk of a stranger coming to the court who had a taste for it, and I thought I'd just

draw nigh here this morning (I hope no offence) to try and fall in with you, for I take you to be the same gentleman.

*Clericus.* I conclude then you belong to the gentle brotherhood ; though your rod and basket look as if trout and lastsprings would hardly satisfy you.

*Stranger.* Lord love you, sir, what should I do without my fishing-rod ? This noble river—there's not an inch of it for miles that I'm not acquainted with, ay, as well as my own little cot on yonder scar ! The gentry about here all know me, and (God bless them !) they never deny me leave to fish. This great rod I use for pike, hundreds of which I may say I have taken. Destructive brutes ! though they pay me well enough in sport and profit ; and the more I catch the more will you and the like of you be pleased.

*Clericus.* But you fish for trout sometimes, don't you ?

*Stranger.* Oh ! yes, and salmon too. I have killed salmon not far from this spot between twenty and thirty pounds weight.

*Clericus.* You have ?

*Stranger.* Yes, and you could do the same if you liked.

*Clericus.* How many do you usually kill in the season?

*Stranger.* I can't boast much of the number. It is hard work too, and mighty tiring when they won't rise.\*

*Clericus.* So much so indeed, and with such little encouragement, that I shall stick to the trout and last-springs.

*Stranger.* Ay, and grayling too, which run large, particularly in the streams above us. May I be so bold as to ask for a sight of your flies?

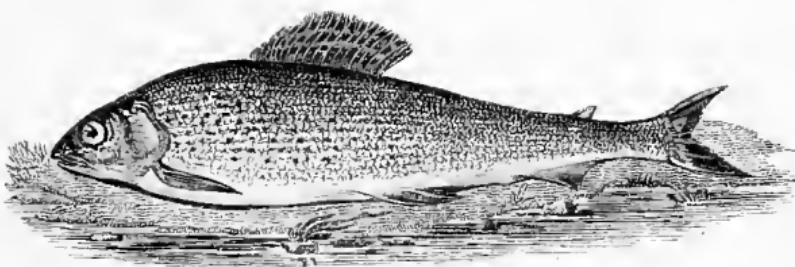
*Clericus.* Oh! by all means. I fear you won't think much of them, as they were chiefly intended for a narrow stream I have of late resided near, many a long mile from this.

*Stranger.* Pretty flies enough, sir, but they won't do for the Wye.

*Clericus.* Why not? if you will permit the shadow of a poor pun to fall upon your favourite river.

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\* The especial recommendation of ordinary Fly-fishing is the small amount of incumbrance that attends it in all its accompaniments. Not so, however, in the case of Salmon-fishing. The rod and tackle alone are burdensome, to say nothing of the labour of handling the same for hours without a rise, as is usually the case, at least in the south and west of England.



“ AND GRAYLING TOO.”



*Stranger.* Not enough blues, and those you have too dark and large by half. These red flies are well enough for trout early in the season, but they wont do here ; nor are the May-flies of the least use. Take my advice and make your flies (if you do make them) very fine,\* and stick chiefly to the blues.

*Clericus.* Many of these flies have been in my book for years ; but I must set to work the first leisure morning and see what I can do.

*Stranger.* In the mean time, sir, my Missis will supply you, and with such flies too, that you will not trouble to make many yourself.

*Clericus.* What a lucky fellow you are to get your wife to make flies for you ; more especially as I see with regret that you have lost your right hand.

*Stranger.* Thank God ! though such is my misfortune, I can still make a fly myself, though of course not so neat as I could wish.† I lost my hand, sir, when fighting for my king and country, (God bless both,) and, accordingly, was compelled

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\* Small flies are almost invariably the best for large rivers in this part of the country, and the reverse for brooks.

† This poor man had an iron hook to supply the place of his lost hand ; it was really wonderful to see how well he could tie a fly.

to leave the service on a small pension. What with that—the trifle I get for being clerk at the little church yonder—the fish I occasionally sell—and the flies my Missis makes, I have quite enough (more perhaps than I deserve) to live upon. Besides, in the winter season I amuse myself with making rods that are usually liked by those who buy them.

*Clericus.* Well, come along with me to the house, and have something to eat and drink. I see we shall be good friends very soon.

Such was the substance of the conversation that passed (as far as I can remember) some years ago between this old soldier and myself. I very soon afterwards heard his history from his own lips, and no uninteresting one was it, though confined to the ups and downs of an humble private.

He appeared to retain a great reverence for the service, though many a long yarn did he spin, in my frequent pectorial excursions with him, of its attendant evils and hardships.

His was a very observant eye; and you should have seen how it sparkled with delight when aught was asked him of an officer he thought well of.

A large mass of men as varied in temper as in the expression of the face—surely our young officers

should be taught something more than the common routine to lead them, as they always do without flinching, in the path of duty, of danger, and of death. Much wild talk we occasionally hear from some of our sapient legislators, more especially of broad-brim notoriety, of the dark stain we still suffer to deface our military code, in failing to consign flogging to the shades of other departed barbarisms. Much more good would such babbler do, if they would occasionally speak a kind word or two in praise of the present improved system, that retains the power of flogging, but resorts to it invariably as the last resource. Who so likely to tell the honest truth as my new friend with the large fishing rod—an intelligent, thoughtful, sober-minded veteran, scarred with downright hard service, and mutilated on the battle-field? And what said he upon the subject? Why, that if flogging were entirely done away with, it would react upon the army as disastrously as would hanging for murder, if repealed, upon society at large. Laws of such a description are necessary evils—permitted to remain on the statute-book for the safety of the good and the terror of the bad: none but the incorrigible are ever flogged—none but the murderer ever hanged.

It was a touching thing, I can tell you, to hear this old soldier expatiate in his simple way on the glories of that ever-memorable day, so fatal to the foe at Corunna, when Soult and his brave Frenchmen were confident they should drive the discomfited English into the sea. His chief seemed still as dear to him and as fresh in his memory as when he saw him in the thickest of the fight, cheering on his men to victory. Alas ! how dearly purchased ! It was but a few minutes before his own hand was shot off, that he saw with dismay the gallant Sir J. Moore fall mortally wounded, not many paces from where he stood. And no tear ever told a truer tale of a heart's devotion, than that I have seen stealing down the hard features of this fine old fisherman when he spoke of the departed hero.

The marble and the brass may tell  
Their fulsome tale of flattery well !  
What higher tribute to the dead,  
Than a few tears sincerely shed ?

The word of command is not the only one our officers should be taught to utter in the private's ear. A few words of kindness now and then; ay, and of counsel too, (shall I add also a good example in outward morality and decorum ?) would this be

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thrown away upon ears little, it may be, accustomed to hear anything of the kind, and sharp eyes, and hearts that must be indeed hard not to feel it with emotion? An army officered by men of this stamp—and what foe (God grant these peaceful days may never be interrupted!) would ever turn it one inch from the straight path that leads to victory?

You wonder perhaps, good reader, that a piscator and a parson should thus leave the tranquil tenour of his way, to touch upon such a subject as this! If you met the old soldier on the banks of the Wye, and saw how happy he always looked, you too, perhaps, would revert in thought to subjects somewhat alien to their wonted train. You would, at any rate, I am sure, agree with me, that early days such as my new friend had spent in the hardest of all hard schools, that teaches the nothingness of personal privation, and the mere cipher-like value of human life, when weighed against duty, (to say nothing of that transient sunbeam, military glory,) could scarcely run their destined course more peacefully in any employment than that of angling—the one of his own choice.

A thorough fisherman in all its departments,

nothing would do but he must give me a practical hint or two on trolling, which he seemed bent on recommending to me; though I thought it then, and still think it unworthy the notice of the fly-fisher.—Deadly, if practised aright, I admit it to be; but decidedly attended with a greater degree of cruelty, than its success can reconcile to my feelings at least. The triangles that the whirling minnow is encircled with—Oh! how they clasp the unhappy fish in their fatal embrace! It is no callous substance they usually penetrate, that in nine cases out of ten the artificial fly adheres to in the fish's mouth;—but deeply imbedded in the shrinking flesh, these terrible triangles never relax their hold till dragged out of the mangled creature by the hand of the fisherman.

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*Clericus.* Well, you are indeed punctual as clock-work! It is just on the stroke of six, the time we fixed on for our meeting.

*Old Soldier.* For the like of me, sir, not to be punctual, would be a bad job, considering the school I have been taught in.

*Clericus.* The water seems a trifle too thick, even for a minnow.\*

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\* A good hand will kill trout with a minnow on the

*Old Soldier.* All the better for you, sir, in trolling from the bank. The trout wont see you, and you need not wade.

*Clericus.* Where are the minnows?

*Old Soldier.* Here, sir, in this tin box; and nice bright little fellows they are.

*Clericus.* What makes you put them in bran?

*Old Soldier.* It hardens them, which is a great advantage.

*Clericus.* By the way, I don't much fancy your trolling-tackle. I have been accustomed to see it made with a leaden cap to draw down upon the head of the minnow, which not only sinks it, but in some degree protects it from weeds, &c.

*Old Soldier.* I have tried both kinds—the one with a leaden cap you speak of, and that I now use, with a large leaded hook to pass through the body of the minnow, and a small lip-hook to keep it in place. I certainly prefer my own, though the other may be the favourite.\*

*Clericus.* Do you see where the water curls round yonder bank, eddying into the shore? If there

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brightest day, and in the clearest water; though of course stained water is all in favour of the troller.

\* A brass killdevil, not too large, that spins well, and is properly armed, will almost rival a real minnow, without the constant trouble that is inseparable from the latter.

isn't a trout at home there, I'll know the reason why.

*Old Soldier.* Stop, sir, let me look at your minnow. It wont spin well.

*Clericus.* Why not?

*Old Soldier.* Because you haven't curved the tail enough. There, now he'll do.

*Clericus.* Oh! how beautifully he spins. Hulloa, did you see that? I just felt the gentleman, but he bustled off in double quick time.

*Old Soldier.* You were too quick for him. When he dashed at you, you gave a nervous-like twitch with your rod, and that saved the trout's life. It's no use trying for him again yet, though he may run at you by and by when we return. Now, sir, try the tail of that stream by the large stone. Many a good trout have I killed in that very spot.

*Clericus.* Here you are, and a big fellow too, or I am mistaken.

*Old Soldier.* Keep his head down the stream if you can, and hold him well in hand. There! cleverly done! He's not much over half a pound though.

*Clericus.* He pulled at first like a pounder. How bright and beautiful are his spots! No bet-

ter fish in season have I killed this year ; and that I suppose made him so strong beyond his size.

*Old Soldier.* That's uncommon likely water ; don't leave it, or you'll leave some good fish behind you.

*Clericus.* They don't come well at me. Just try your hand at them.

Well done ! you have hooked a monster. What a plunge he made ! Take care he doesn't break you.

*Old Soldier.* No fear of that. He's not a trout after all, but a chub, if I mistake not, and a big one too. He hangs as dead upon the line, as if there was a stone at the end of it. Please, sir, give us a hand with the landing-net, while I coax him in close to the bank. All right, there he is !

*Clericus.* Why, what a gigantic brute !—To fight so little for his life too ! I protest if the half-pound trout didn't beat him hollow.

*Old Soldier.* It's always the way with these rough fish. They make one tremendous struggle at first, and if they don't break you then, they turn sulky, and soon give in. This fish can't be short of two pounds and a half, if not more.

*Clericus.* I should be very sorry to taste him.

*Old Soldier.* Oh ! as for that, I shall most likely

sell him at the first farm-house I come across. Farmers aint so nice as you gentry ; and a bit of fish though a trifle soft, and flabby-like, is no bad relish.

*Clericus.* Surely that's not another of the brutes you've just hooked ?

*Old Soldier.* No, no, not he ! Did you see that ? He jumped a yard, at least, out of the water.

*Clericus.* What a glorious trout ! give way a little, or he'll break you. There, now he's quieter. What a shake he gave ! Poor fellow, your race is well-nigh run ! Where's the landing-net ?

*Old Soldier.* Gently, sir, gently !—he saw you, and now he's off again.\*

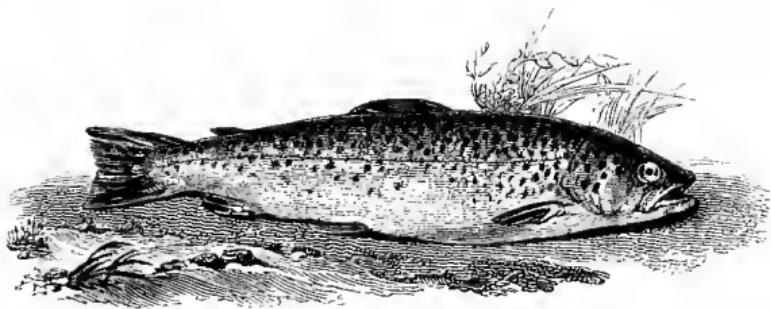
*Clericus.* Just draw him round into this slack water. There, now we have him.—Not much under two pounds, I should say !

*Old Soldier.* If anything, he's a trifle over. I wish you had hooked him though.

*Clericus.* Oh ! you managed him so beautifully, that if I had a taste for trolling, which I confess our sport this evening has not awakened within me, a better lesson I could not have learnt. A quick eye, a tender, active hand, and an entire ab-

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\* Nothing seems to revive a tired trout more than the sight of a man with a landing-net.



“WHAT A GLORIOUS TROUT.”



fence of hurry and bustle, I perceive to be indispensable, if you wish to excel in trolling.

The three trout I have killed, and the five that weigh down your basket, would make no unhandsome dish.

*Old Soldier.* Shall I empty mine into your basket now, or wait till we are nearer the house?

*Clericus.* Neither one, nor the other; the idea of my robbing you of your fish!

*Old Soldier.* Pray, sir, do take these three beauties, at any rate, to the Missis, and she wont have the laugh against us as she had the other day, when our baskets were so empty.

*Clericus.* Well, I wont offend you by refusing, especially as there is a lady in the cafe.

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Before I leave this subject, I may as well describe in as few words as possible a scene I witnessed a day or two afterwards, when I accidentally stumbled upon the old soldier hard at work trolling for pike.

*Clericus.* Good evening to you! What sport?

*Old Soldier.* I've scarcely begun yet, but I hope before long to have a pike or two in my basket.

*Clericus.* Your tackle, I see, is as strong as if you expected to hook a shark.

*Old Soldier.* Not a bit too strong for these devils of pike, which I look upon not only as fresh-water sharks, but know them to bite as keen, and to be as fierce. You see I am trying to tempt them with one of their favourite lastsprings.

These gorge hooks which are put thus back to back, and leaded sufficiently high, I pull through the mouth and body of the bait, by means of a long needle curved at the end, and which is hooked to the top of the gimp that connects the wire fastened to the leaded hooks. The strongest gut that was ever made would be but a mere cobweb in a pike's mouth ; and therefore I am obliged to use gimp instead. The bait hangs down with the two barbs, as you see, just appearing on each side the mouth. To keep the bait steady, I usually tie it to the gimp with white thread just above the fork of the tail ; and to prevent the line from twisting, one or two swivels are needed.

*Clericus.* I see exactly ; but you can't possibly handle that great rod, as you would if trolling for trout ?

*Old Soldier.* Certainly not ; it's quite a different thing. You must hold the rod above the reel, resting the butt of it on the upper part of your thigh. When you have drawn out a yard at least

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of line with your left hand thus, you must then send the baited hook with a jerk into the water. Let it sink nearly to the bottom ; then draw it, not too fast, towards the surface of the water, stepping gradually back, till you bring it near the shore.

*Clericus.* From seeing your tackle, and hearing your explanation, I could easily imitate it, and, I think, use it too.

*Old Soldier.* Books are very well in their way, but you will learn more in an hour's walk with a fisherman who understands his business, than you would from a book in a twelvemonth.

*Clericus.* And yet what a blessing it is to have free access to books—to read the thoughts of others wiser than ourselves !

*Old Soldier.* You may well say that, sir. I know what a poor ignorant man I am ; yet what should I be, unless I was able to read ?

*Clericus.* Besides, you make yourself very useful in your situation as parish clerk.

*Old Soldier.* I try to do my best, sir. For the like of me to be obliged to attend church every Sunday, I consider a great thing. Tired sometimes with a whole week's walking, I should be inclined, I fear, to miss it sometimes. And yet I

never return from church, without feeling more comfortable.

*Clericus.* I rejoice I touched upon the subject, as you have solved the question in the same light I have always been inclined to view it in myself. What should we all be without some such obligation as that in your case to urge us to duties we ought to fulfil, and yet continually feel disposed to neglect ? I have heard many spoken of in no kindly way, because they insisted upon each member of their household regularly attending church, as though it were an undue infringement upon the rights of conscience. If a good parent will insist upon his son's discharge of his private and social duties ;—how much more ought he to do so in the case of those of a much higher order ! And shall a domestic receive less attention of this kind at the hands of his master, than a child does from its parent ?

*Old Soldier.* It used to do my heart good, I can tell you, to see Squire H—— come into church, it put me so much in mind of old times. I don't think a servant of his (and there was a precious lot of them !) would have thought of such a thing as staying away from church, any more than from waiting at table, or brushing his master's clothes.

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The one seemed as natural as the other. And yet, sir, when the Squire fell from his horse and was killed, it was miserable work to go among the servants then ; and when the day came for the funeral, the crying and sobbing from all of them—oh, sir ! it was a touching sight !

*Clericus.* I am afraid I am detaining you from your sport ! My conversation wont fill your basket.

*Old Soldier.* You wouldn't say that if you only knew how I love to have a few words with such as you, sir. However, I should like to show you how to catch a pike, though I doubt if I shall persuade you to try your hand at it.

*Clericus.* I observe you throw your bait into the deepest water, and under the trees, if possible.

*Old Soldier.* It's full early yet for pike to begin prowling abroad for their prey ; though it must be drawing near their supper-time, I want to save some of them the fatigue of their evening excursion.

*Clericus.* But what makes you stop so suddenly and hold your rod motionless ?

*Old Soldier.* Keep away from the bank if you please. I had a run, and, I believe, the pike is at me now, though he is so quiet.

*Clericus.* Why don't you try and hook him then at once ?

*Old Soldier.* Because I want him to gorge the bait, and then is the time to strike. Ah ! I was too quick for him, though he began moving away. Another minute or two and he would have been very soon in my basket. In striking too soon I jerked the bait out of his mouth.

*Clericus.* There is a good deal I see to be learnt even in trolling for pike.

*Old Soldier.* Though so voracious they are cunning enough, and require to be humoured, if you wish to make their acquaintance. Sometimes I run three or four following without catching one.

*Clericus.* Some of the elders of the tribe, I take it, begin to have an inkling of the old saying so much in vogue out of the water, that "it's not all gold that glisters."

*Old Soldier.* I shouldn't at all wonder. Something, at any rate, seems to make them very shy of me this evening. Suppose we try our luck higher up the river, as I have fished this water a good deal of late.

*Clericus.* You see the tail of that lovely stream ! I was trying it a few days ago and hooked a trout that rose at my first dropper. In drawing him towards me I saw the water in commotion just below him in two different directions ; and on a sud-

den the trout I had hold of seemed to have grown marvellously in weight. Such a splutter too as there was in the water, and such a fight as I had—it really quite astonished me. Till lo ! after a minute or two I succeeded in landing—not the trout only I had first hooked, but another also—and not only two trout, but a roach into the bargain. The three fish together weighed rather more than a pound.

*Old Soldier.* I have often hooked three last-springs at a throw, but never came up to that. But stop, sir, if I'm not mistaken, I've run a large fish.

*Clericus.* Do give him plenty of time.

*Old Soldier.* He's in no hurry to move, and seems to take it rather coolly.

*Clericus.* Are you sure he has not left you ?

*Old Soldier.* Yes. I can just feel him busy at the bait. Now he begins to move quietly away. There, my friend, now I have you safe enough.

*Clericus.* He bends that huge rod like an osier. How the reel whizzes ! Have a care or he'll break you. He doesn't seem inclined to show himself to the vulgar gaze.; no bounding into the air with him, like a trout or salmon.

*Old Soldier.* He's a very heavy fish, I'm sure ;

and is trying his strength against me. See how steadily he pulls.

*Clericus.* Oh ! what a rush he made then. It was well you gave way a little. He seems inclined to make for that deep hole by the stubb.

*Old Soldier.* I must stop him or we shall part company there.

*Clericus.* Well done ! I was afraid the strain would have broken you somewhere ; now you have turned him, he will soon give in.

*Old Soldier.* Not he, I fear. The strength of such a pike as this is enormous. However, the worst, I trust, is over.

*Clericus.* You have been at work ten minutes already. I should have thought those terrible hooks in the poor creature's vitals would have tamed him long before this.

*Old Soldier.* He begins now to flag a bit. You see I've shortened the line as much as possible. The large landing net you so laughed at will be useful enough now.

*Clericus.* Tyrant as he is—even to the unnatural extent of eating his own children, he is very unlike those daftardly chub.

*Old Soldier.* Oh ! as for that, he'll fight to the very last in his own element ; ay, and out of

it too, as my bleeding fingers have often felt. Please, sir, to draw nigh while I get his head out of the water. There, what do you think of that?

*Clericus.* Think? why that he's a noble fellow, and deserves a better fate. I should not be very sorry if he had succeeded in his last struggle of despair, except that he would be sure to die a far worse death.

*Old Soldier.* Now, sir, please to try again. Hurrah! there you have him.

*Clericus.* What an enormous brute!

*Old Soldier.* I knew at first he must be a thumper. He's not far off ten pound weight.

*Clericus.* What a desperate looking thief he is, armed with those needle-like teeth.

*Old Soldier.* Don't go too near him or he'll snap at you like a dog. There I believe I have quieted him now. I always knock them a sharp blow on the back of the head like that, and it generally kills them.

*Clericus.* What havoc such a fellow as this must have committed! How many thousands of the finny tribe have entered that huge mouth of his never to return!

*Old Soldier.* And frogs, rats, young moor-hens, if not a duck or two occasionally. You've heard,

no doubt, the story of the poor swan that was taken out of the water he had long been the ornament of, with a huge pike hanging dead from his neck? No! Well, it seems the swan was thrusting his long neck into the water as usual, when a pike—espionage something that looked inviting, made a sudden rush at the swan's head and swallowed it. It is supposed that the pike was suffocated in endeavouring in vain to get the swan's head either up or down. At any rate, when the bird was taken up, there hung the dead pike, as I said before.

*Clericus.* I have read of a pike of the enormous weight of fifty pounds, that was taken many years ago out of the late Duke of Newcastle's lake at Clumber; and that a carp no less than fourteen pounds was found sticking in his throat; in endeavouring to swallow which it is supposed the gigantic glutton met his own death. I should be sorry to bathe in water frequented by such a monster.

*Old Soldier.* I could tell you some amusing anecdotes of these fish, but the evening is drawing in apace, and you'll be thinking of returning home.

*Clericus.* Well, I am much obliged to you for the lesson you have given me, but I must tell you

candidly that if the pike have no worse enemy than your humble servant I am afraid they will increase and multiply unmolested. Good bye for the present.





## CHAPTER IV.

“ But should you lure  
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots  
Of pendant trees, the monarch of the brook,  
Behoves you then to ply your finest art ;  
Long time he following cautious, scans the fly,  
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft  
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.  
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun  
Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death,  
With fullen plunge.”

THOMSON.



THE fishing I enjoyed in my two years' sojourn near the Wye, was continually diversified with incidents that anglers love to prate about, and laugh over long, long after they have passed away.

How well do I remember, as if it had happened only yesterday, a piece of most amusing cleverness (I will not call it craftiness), that was enacted by my then boyish friend Piscator (for we had become great cronies).

I had been wandering by the river for some hours, with sufficient sport to induce me to persevere. The evening was just beginning to set in ; and what with the delicious weather, the balmy breeze, and the quiet enjoyment of my favourite amusement, I was in the best possible humour.

Just at this happy conjuncture, who should heave in sight, “ looming in the distance,” as a late Chancellor of the Exchequer would say, but my friend Piscator. Oh ! it was delightful to behold him hastening on towards me, as though some unexpected good fortune had befallen him—some glad tidings been told him perhaps, that sent the blood dancing through his veins in double quick time—some wondrous discovery been made by him, that suffused his cheeks, forehead and all, with the glow of unusual excitement. How proud was his step ! How great his condescension in speaking of the trout I told him I had caught ; asking me, by the way (as though he knew what answer I should return) if I had yet fallen in with a salmon !

The whole bearing and demeanour of the excited youth puzzled me not a little, and set me wondering what had happened thus to work so sudden and complete a change in him !

At length in gazing very attentively and thought-

fully at him, I caught sight of a long, lank, shark-like creature, suspended round his shoulders, and dangling down his back. After a momentary inspection of the uncouth creature, I inquired, innocently enough, where he had met with that miserable looking “Jack ?” “Jack !” said my young friend, “Jack, indeed ! why, don’t you see it’s a salmon, and a glorious one too ?” And with these words, uttered in a tone of ineffable disdain at my extreme simplicity, off stalked the proud captor, without condescending to exchange another syllable with me.

If Sam Weller was led so feelingly to exclaim, “Rum creeturs is women !” not the less feelingly could I help saying in his expressive style, “Rum creeturs is fishermen !” I could not for the life of me for a long time solve the knotty problem of my friend’s strangeness. That I was right and he wrong—the finny creature being far more like a jack than a salmon—I had not the smallest doubt. Whence then the unexpected airs and graces of the indignant youth ?

I felt quite uneasy and dissatisfied, till the cat fairly jumped out of the bag. It seems that my young friend had been talking in his father’s presence of the wonders he meant to achieve in the

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fishng way ; how he had provided himself, at no small sacrifice of pocket-money, with a salmon-rod, reel, line, &c. And as all indulgent parents feel indisposed on occasions of this kind to damp the ardour of their ambitious sons, the one in question had promised the aspiring youth, that if he would bring him a salmon caught by himself, with his own rod, he would give him two shillings a pound for it, let it be what weight it may (secretly suspecting, no doubt, that he might safely offer ten times the amount, as far as the probability went of his being called on to pay it).

Now it appears that the keen eye of the young angler had detected the creature, whose dead carcase I had so grievously flandered, taking in something on the surface of the water he concluded to be a fly ; and, hastening home for his salmon-rod, he commenced throwing over the same spot with the utmost ardour and hope. The poor starveling, seeing something move on the water that looked like insect food, languidly opened his lank, lantern-jaws, and was hooked in the twinkling of an eye.

Imagination, you are aware, good reader, will go great lengths, and I doubt not that the happy angler then imagined that the faint attempts of the

poor prisoner to escape, were indeed struggles of the most desperate kind, that only the nicest skill and patience on his part, succeeded in rendering futile; till at length, fairly beaten, he managed to land him—the first veritable salmon he had ever caught, to his inexpressible delight!

Perhaps something like the spirit of those fine lines of Stoddart, on the death of a salmon, flashed across his mind :

“ A birr ! a whirr ! the salmon’s up,  
 Give line, give line and measure ;  
 But now he turns ! keep down ahead,  
 And lead him as a child is led,  
 And land him at your leisure.  
 Hark to the music of the reel !  
 ‘Tis welcome, it is glorious ;  
 It wanders through the winding wheel,  
 Returning and victorious.

“ A birr ! a whirr ! the salmon’s in,  
 Upon the bank extended ;  
 The princely fish is gasping slow,  
 His brilliant colours come and go,  
 All beautifully blended.  
 Hark to the music of the reel,  
 It murmurs and it closes ;  
 Silence is on the conquering reel,  
 Its wearied line reposes.

“ No birr ! no whirr ! the salmon’s out,  
The noble fish—the thumper :  
Strike through his gill the ready gaff,  
And bending homewards, we shall quaff,  
Another glorious bumper !  
Hark to the music of the reel,  
We listen with devotion ;  
There’s something in that circling wheel  
That wakes the heart’s emotion ! ”

By the way, I never inquired of the indulgent parent how the salmon tasted that cost him two shillings a pound ? I should not, however, be at all surprised, if fancy had clothed it in his eyes with all the vaunted superiority that the king of fish so deservedly merits. I may perhaps venture to remark, that the soft, flabby flesh of a very old fish (I speak not of years, but of season) such as that, I would far rather have consigned to any other stomach than my own. A new fish taken from thy sweet, pellucid bosom, thou lovely Wye ; what of the whole finny tribe can be named in the same day with it ? But an old fish—a lean, emaciated, shrivelled creature—oh ! defend me from the unsavoury morsel !

The intense eagerness with which the salmon seeks his favourite haunts is a wonderful provision of an ever kind Providence for his comfort and

well-being. The very object, however, which at one season of the year carries him undaunted through a thousand dangers and difficulties to achieve ;—now rushing madly up the boiling torrent—now curling himself in true leap-frog fashion, and springing many, many feet through the air, to the astonishment of the beholder, over lofty cascades, and apparently impassable barriers—ay ! and if unsuccessful at first, renewing his endeavours again and again with such undiminished ardour ! the very object, I say, which incites him to attempt all this, when attained, is soon after avoided by him no less hastily, than it was pursued hotly just before. (Not very unlike the phantasies that men pursue at certain seasons of their life,—worshipped to-day, and loathed perhaps to-morrow.) The prime object of salmon in ascending the Wye and other large rivers that flow into the sea, is to deposit their spawn as near the source as possible, as the safest receptacle and best natural locality for the development of the young fry. As soon as this all-important business has been accomplished, the salmon hastens down the stream to recruit his impaired strength in the congenial waters of the sea. If, then, he is detained longer than his pleasure from carrying out his intentions, he begins to lan-

guish and sicken ;—gradually exchanging his glossy coat, bespangled with silver, for one of a dingy, dull-looking hue. And as the captive in the dungeon pines for freedom and fresh air, so does the poor imprisoned salmon, till he becomes at last a wasted skeleton, and dies, as it were, by inches.

We leave the reader to imagine, how totally dissimilar must a salmon be approaching this condition to one in prime season !

Incredible as it may appear, I am about to record a fact, not altogether foreign to the subject, that a friend of mine exults in, (no wonder !) and will doubtless remember as long as he can remember anything on this side the grave.

It seems that he was one day engaged in his favourite amusement, and picking out of the Wye now a trout, now a laftspring, and then a grayling, perhaps ; when suddenly he saw, to his extreme astonishment, not a trout, nor a grayling, but a monster of a salmon, as it appeared, rise and take in one of his droppers,—a red palmer he was fishing with.

Now just imagine, good reader, (presuming you to be a fisherman,) my friend's situation with a rod about ten feet in length, and light in proportion —a mere reed, as it were, in his hand—and at the

end of the line a leaping, rushing, maddened creature such as this. Would you not have felt inclined to give in at once, and allow the huge fish to have his own way, snapping your line like a cob-web, and shivering your rod to atoms? Not so, however, was my friend disposed. As good a sportsman as he is confessedly an honest man, he determined at once to buckle himself up for the fight, though he knew he had such fearful odds against him. And a hard, hard fight it was, from his graphic account of it! In the eyes of a disinterested person, ignorant of the gentle art, he would doubtless have appeared like one "*possessed.*" Skipping about in every direction, now here, now there,—putting himself into all sorts of attitudes, as his wrapt attention and intense excitement would naturally incline him—as resolute and determined in aspect, as if the fate of the world hung trembling on the issue—what a fine opportunity for Landseer to have hit off, in his inimitable way, an animal of a nobler order than his favourite dogs and deer; worked up to the utmost stretch of his physical and mental faculties. Not only did my friend know that he had the enormous strength of a large desperate fish to contend with; but consummate art and cunning too, that salmon fishers find no less trying to their tackle.

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The first effort of the salmon in question, directly he found himself pricked, was to bound high in the air, graceful, and glittering like silver—to show, perhaps, a faint specimen of his agility! How tender must have been the hold of that little rod—how nice the calculation, to measure out the exact proportion of line, and no more—how admirable the judgment, to hold on within a hair's breadth of the resistance that might safely be ventured on. After the somerset he had exhibited, up rushed the frightened fish, to see what speed would do to free him from his foe. Fast flew the fisherman too, still keeping his rod on the uttermost bend it would bear without breaking, and the line strained within the smallest fraction it would admit of.

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Some time had now elapsed, and still the fisherman saw (it must have been with astonishment) that all was in his favour. The salmon took it into his bewildered head to turn short round, and commence (without absolutely making down the stream) taking a zig-zag direction that way. Now was the time to keep him, if possible in his present intention—to humour him, as a fond mother would humour a great, overgrown, obstinate boy, alternately pulling and coaxing him, without exactly

letting out her secret. And now was the time for patience to develope its perfect work; (not patience of the ordinary kind that persons fancy in their ideal personification of a fisherman sitting all the day long in one spot with his eyes intently fixed on an immovable float;) but patience in its nobler character, that masters the ardour of excitement, directs the restless hand, and controls the irascible temper.

When the salmon found he was still a prisoner after his numberless attempts to tear himself from the odious little barb that held him, I conclude he thought within himself that now was the time or never to recruit his strength, which he found gradually getting less and less. It appears that at the bottom of the stream, down which he was descending rather involuntarily than otherwise, lay a wide, deep pool of (comparatively speaking) still water. No sooner had he reached this, than he became instantly quiescent—as though he were about to breathe his last in his own beloved element.

Had my friend been a less knowing hand he would probably have been as well satisfied to rest awhile, as the salmon was apparently thus to give in without any more ado. But no! splash went

a huge stone at his resting-place, and another, and another ! till the frightened fish again started on his race for life, as heavy in hand, if he was not as active, as ever. Now was the time to keep him down the stream, half tired, that the water might hasten the work of destruction !

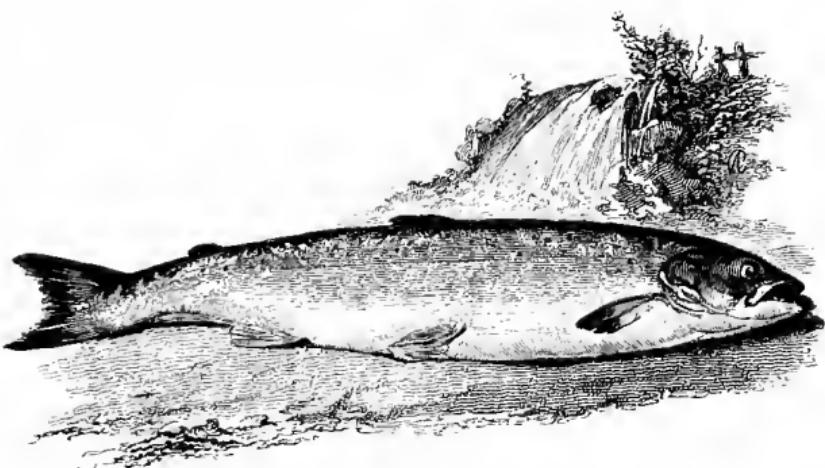
Considerably more than half an hour has *fled*, (not passed like ordinary half hours,) and the noble fish is almost his own master—still leading his persecutor a pretty dance ; now hurrying him splashing through the shallows,—now forcing him into pools, perilous to look at. Alas, for the king of the finny tribe ! It is almost his last struggle, daring and desperate ! Ah ! he falls back with his white belly uppermost, though he still sweeps the water with his tail, languid and listless. Stealthily now does the fisherman feel how far he can go in drawing him towards the shore. There, he has him at last well upon the shallows ; and see, his head is just raised out of the water ! Quick as lightning down rushes the almost frantic fisherman—clasps his victim with both hands tight above the tail, and the next moment he is his own !

A salmon nearly nine pounds in weight, fairly killed with a rod ten feet in length, a common fly line and gut finer, if anything, than ordi-

nary. Talk of fishermen, indeed, armed with rods like young oaks of no mean size, and lines that would do for cart ropes, in the salmon-teeming waters of Norway ! Why, such tackle and main force would do much to tame the monsters there ! But who of the most successful of you all can beat such a feat as this,—of skill *versus* strength ?

The reader will perceive from the account of this marvellous capture, that a fisherman needs something more than the mere ability to throw a fly well—the “*ne plus ultra*” of good fishing in the opinion of many. If a fly-fisher would aim at anything like excellence in the art, he will soon find that a certain tenderness of hand is indispensable, so that, whether it be a minnow or a monster that rises at him, he does not by too sudden and strong a movement of his wrist, endanger his tackle. He will find also that great caution is needed in withdrawing his line from the water, as it often happens that a fish will quietly take his fly under the surface, without his being aware of it. If then, in such a case he is too quick in his movements, not unfrequently will he either lose his fly, or do himself some other damage.

Now an old friend of mine who sometimes joins me in my rambles, with a sovereign contempt for



SKILL *versus* STRENGTH.



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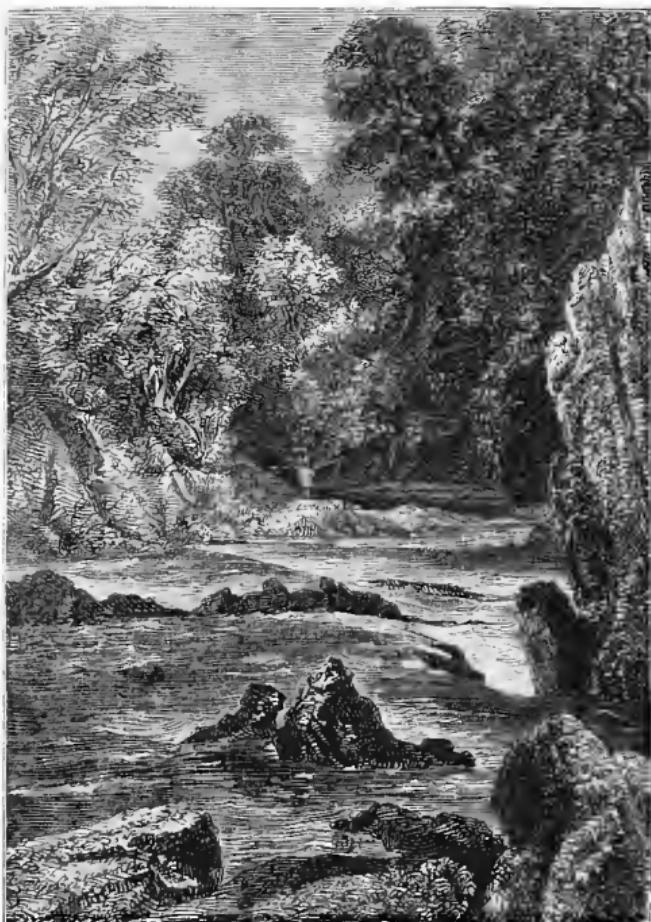
all such hints, delights to throw the trout he hooks at once out of the water, without condescending to play them an instant. But then he is not a real brother of the craft, though a fly-fisher, for he invariably uses the natural insect.

It is, I believe, in “Oliver Twist,” we have the very amusing history of the “Artful Dodger,” that nice young gentleman, whose pleasure and pride it was to prig (vulgarly speaking) from the pockets of the public, all sorts of valuables, from a sovereign to a snuff-box. Should these pages meet the eye of my friend, he will not be offended (I know) at being reminded of his old “*soubriquet*.” A veritable “Artful Dodger” was he to the innocent, unsuspecting trout! It was a sight worth seeing to watch him stealing along the water-side, on the look out for a “*rise*;” and then dropping the fluttering bait within sight of the expectant fish. I almost fancy I hear his merry laugh now, (though I am scribbling at midnight, far away from my favourite haunts,) when he had succeeded not only in deluding another victim, but in “dragging him out of the wet,” (as he termed it,) immediately he was hooked. It was labour thrown away to assure him that he lost more fish this way than he landed; tearing the hook from

their mouths by force, though it would have held them fast enough, if delicately handled.

A companion who enjoyed the sport would sometimes volunteer to cater for him in the fly way. Very fond too of a practical joke was he, even if played upon a poor trout. Instead, therefore, of supplying flies that were swarming around him, it was his especial delight to induce the "Artful Dodger" to try the most uncouth-looking insects in the shape of flies he could meet with in the grass and bushes about him. That the trout took no further notice of them after the first inspection, it may readily be imagined; still, that he did manage occasionally to tempt one to his ruin by means of a very strange, unsightly insect, is undeniable enough.

How often have I watched these two whimsical fishermen peering between the bushes, or from behind trees, in the utmost state of delight when they saw how the inquisitive trout sailed round and round, it may be, a small slender-bodied blue dragon-fly, or black-beetle, which the "Artful Dodger" was endeavouring to put into the most inviting of attitudes before them. Though both these insects have in their turn been used, I know no instance in which he succeeded in inducing a



“THE ARTFUL DODGER.”



trout to try the taste of them ; but I am not quite so sure whether a humble bee or a precocious wasp have not answered better.

I have as little taste for “*bobbing*,” as for angling with a worm ; \* but I must admit that when the “*Artful Dodger*” stuck to the prevailing fly

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\* Notwithstanding our present predilections, we know not what they may be a few years hence, as the following lines will sufficiently show.

“ Old Will, with thee  
In youth and glee  
I’ve spent some funny hours ;  
But now I fear,  
The winter drear  
Of age, upon us lowers.

Yet still a dish  
We catch of fish,  
As well as some that brag ;  
No more we ply  
The treacherous fly,  
The brandling fills the bag.

Here in this glen,  
Apart from men,  
We lift our grateful hearts ;  
And feel the joy,  
Without alloy,  
That nature wild imparts.

on the water, (particularly the May-fly,) he was a deadly enemy indeed to the fish. Insinuating his rod into apparently the most inaccessible of places, and dropping the natural fly on the surface of deep holes that it was in vain to attempt reaching with the artificial fly, it would have been strange indeed if some of the heaviest fish did not usually

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From Providence  
Our confidence,  
This boon we anglers crave ;  
That we anon  
May angle on,  
Safe to a peaceful grave."

J. F. D.

These touching lines of a true heart, that kind old man of our cloth J. F. D., whose duty to his neighbours is of so acceptable a kind, that it is ever spontaneous, and has no parochial limits. He never met his fellow-man by mountain or river, or in the broad and bye ways of life, but he either made or endeavoured to make him his friend, by making him his companion.

The very beasts of the field know him by instinct, for he stops as he passes to give even them a kind look, and some gentle word of his blessing, and neither grammar nor dictionary are needed to translate them.

O the blessed suavity of a true, humane, Christian heart ! let me pay homage to it, by quoting these few simple lines —the dictates of its spirit.

fall to his lot. It was his proud boast, that though he fell far short of me in numbers, he could beat me hollow in size. Alas, for the old cuckoo-note of the "Dodger." The last time I was out with him he had to sing to another tune. Taking a trout a little under a pound from his basket, which doubtless looked far larger when dripping with wet and floundering on the bank he first caught sight of it, he triumphantly asked, if I had one out of the forty I had caught that could come up to that? Yes, I replied, I have one half as large again, that I killed in the bend of the river above, at the very top of the pool that has the large tree lying across it. Not another word did he say on the subject, knowing that he had tried the same spot with all the art he was master of, though to no purpose.

Should the reader wonder at this digression from the Wye to the Clun, he will, I trust, excuse it, from a desire on my part to touch (no matter how slightly) on any pectorial reminiscence, that may at the moment occur to me, though not absolutely in order.

To return, however, to the Wye, which of course would afford little opportunity to the "Dodger" for creeping and crawling along its banks.

Most of those who are accustomed to fish in the Wye, are as much in the water as out of it. Now I have always felt a secret repugnance to wading, not only because in small rivers and brooks it does, I am convinced, often more harm than good, and completely destroys the sport (for a time at least) of those behind you; but because, under all circumstances, it lays up for the evening of life, if you are permitted to reach it, a double amount of aches and pains than would ordinarily, I am sure, be the case.

Fly-fishing with me would lose its prime charm, if it were not, as I have ever found it, indebted for its attraction more to the accompaniments that are usually associated with it, than to its bare naked character of killing fish, as the eye of a poacher would only regard it in. Without the excitement of the latter, it would, of course, cease to interest me, or any one else, I presume; but this is only one of the many pleasures that are inseparable from the practice of the gentle art.

Rambling carelessly for hours in fine weather beside "the fair streams," that the "*Sketcher*" so touchingly yet truthfully tells us—

"ever ran  
With the same music, since the world began;"

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with every sound and sight attuned so harmoniously, as *Orpheus*-like, to take captive the senses, and give instant birth to sensations within that are unusually placid ;—if it were indispensable that you should be as much in the water as out of it, the charm (to me at least) would be broken ; and I for one should be unnatural enough to fly at once the society of my brethren of the angle, scared by the eternal splashing of the water, and the cold creeping sensations it left behind, to say nothing of a hundred other disagreeables it must necessarily entail.

When I see a good fish rise beyond reach, to step into the water to get at him, is so natural to me, as scarcely to need mention ; but it is the habit of wading I disapprove of, that very young men will persevere in, in many cases from the like spirit of bravado, that induces little children, when they first begin walking, to pick out the dirtiest puddle to try their powers in.

I remember fishing one day in the *Wye* with *Piscator*, when a sudden longing came over me to try some likely gravels on the other side. It is true, I might have crossed over easily enough, but then I knew I should, by so doing, be most uncomfortable for the next hour or two ; and was it worth while, I asked myself doubtfully, for a

few lastsprings or trout? My amphibious friend I saw just above me flogging away for his life in the middle of the stream. Reading in my countenance somewhat, I conclude, of what was passing beneath, he proposed carrying me across the stream on his back, provided I would trust my precious person to his safe keeping. With no less innocence than willingness, I at once accepted his kind proposal. It was some time before I got well into the saddle, he being a tall, slender youth, and I heavier by some pounds than I am now, though little under eleven stone. I could not help fancying at starting that I detected something very like a passing smile play upon his countenance, and that was enough to put me a little on my guard; though if I had a suspicion of foul play, it was a very faint one.

He seemed, I thought, to flounder along very uneasily, as if the burthen were too much for him, considering the rapidity and depth of the stream. When he reached the middle of the river, where I was obliged to hold up my legs, to prevent them from dangling in the wet, he shook himself violently, like a dog does when he first comes out of the water, intending, it seems, to shake me off, sprawling all fours, into the river. Not seeing the

success he expected follow his manœuvres, he stopped short, and declared he would go no further, suggesting I had better dismount at once. Oh ! my friend, thinks I, this is the mischief you are up to, is it ? So I caught him tight by the neck, just pressing my two thumbs upon it sufficiently hard, to remind him that if he felt inclined to drown me, I fully intended to throttle him first. There I sat, like the old man of the sea on the back of Sinbad ; and had you seen us, kind reader, from the bank, you would have enjoyed the spectacle, all the more from being on " *terra firma* " yourself.

The struggle was a sharp but short one. Not only did I force my reluctant bearer to land me safely, but before I got off his back to promise, on the word of a true Waltonian, to convey me across again when I required it.

It seems that Piscator had practised this same prank upon a friend of his, who was incased in a large "*macintosh*," with complete success. It was with no little pleasure he described to me very accurately, how the unhappy wight in question had dropped from his back, with a fly jerk he had contrived to give him, head foremost into the midst of the like whirling stream we had just left. Not

waiting to see how he managed to crawl out half-drowned on dry land again, he betook himself at once to his heels without looking behind him. And well was it he did so ! for so furious was his friend, that he flew after him almost foaming at the mouth with rage.

No wonder he felt a wee bit angry ! For not only was he half-choked with the Wye water, and dripping wet from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, but he knew he should not hear the last of it for many a month to come. Piscator did not tell me whether his pursuer caught him or not, for scarcely could he articulate another word, so completely was he overcome with laughter at his poor friend's expense.

In rejoicing at my own escape, it struck me that my intended wetting was in part payment for the slight I had dared to put a short time previously on the noble fish I had so unwittingly likened to a Jack. Well, honest Piscator, I forgive thee from my heart the unfriendly attempt—all the more readily from its complete discomfiture. Many a safe ride have I since enjoyed on the same saddle through the boiling water. Whether this arose from a due regard to the inevitable consequences that once saved me from the like fate thy

friend in the “*macintosh*” had to submit to? or because old Time had stripped us of some years of our allotted span;—ay, and stripped thee, dear Piscator, of the fire of thy youthful vivacity;—I know not.

However, here we are, jogging on through life with the same fondness for a day’s fly-fishing as ever. Still to ramble on as of old through the green meadows, and hear with undiminished pleasure the same music in the distant waterfall, and watch with unabated interest our old favourites that fish, like ourselves, though with different tackle—the sedate-looking, solitary heron—or the bright halcyon, glancing for a moment in the sunbeams, and then gone, like an arrow, from the sight—or the ever-restless water-ouzel,\* with that peculiar pertness he invariably looks up at you with, as if asking you what business you had to obtrude yourself upon the privacy of his haunts?

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\* How true to nature are the following lines of Professor Wilson :

“ In the osier bank the ouzel sitting  
Hath heard her steps, and away is flitting  
From stone to stone, as she glides along,  
Then sinks in the stream with a broken song.”

Strange, Piscator, that all this should delight us now as much as ever.

Permit me to attempt a solution of the secret, in some degree at least :—

The pleasures that pall upon the appetite most—search and see if they trespass not against some plain rule of judgment, or discretion, or morality, or religion? Pursued, perhaps, at the sacrifice of health and domestic comfort; or beyond time's nice proportion that is weighed out to us, as it were, in equal balances to enable all needful things to be done in order; or at the insane cost of every high and noble feeling of self-respect; or the total abandonment of that mysterious warning that fails not to reach every ear, though it may not move every heart? But are there any painful drawbacks like these attendant on the pleasure we feel in haunting the streams in the spring and early days of summer, to ply our gentle art?

I will not stop to put the argument into such a syllogistic shape as would smack of Oxford and Whateley, but merely remark, that the *endurance* of the above pleasure may, in a great degree, be reduced to its entire freedom from that dead weight (so to speak) that drags other pleasures sooner or later to the ground, and makes them so vapid and valueless.

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There are persons, it is true, of such a strange temperament, that they can go forth and gaze upon the fair landscape in a May-morning, with no symptom of emotion to prove that they are either pleased or pained at the spectacle before them. Let the sun light up the whole expanse within the horizon with its glorious beams, they appear to be no more gladdened than if all were eclipsed in gloom, and fading into darkness. Let every tree that meets them, every hedge-row they pass by, be clothed in their newest apparel of softest green that is so grateful to the eye!—the change by them is no more noticed than if each branch, and bough, and spray, remained as leafless as they were a month or two previously. Let the flowers at their feet woo them, by the beauty of their blossoms, or the fragrance they fling forth in such sweet profusion; their senses seem fast locked up in impenetrable obtuseness.

To such as these it would be in vain to write of the associations that are inseparable from fly-fishing. They ought not to leave the smoky purlieus of the city, or the little coterie of choice spirits like themselves, who can divine nothing beyond the bare utilitarian principle itself worth living for.

But to all (and their name, I believe, is *legion*) who sigh for the sight of the sweet country, when it begins to gather its gay, green garniture, (all the more welcome, perhaps, from the novelty of the scene,) can I warmly recommend the gentle art, as ever ready to give a greater zest to their rambles, and a keener edge to their inclinations to trace out the wildest scenery to be met with in the mountain-glen, or the softest and sweetest in the shady nooks that the voice of many waters first calls them to notice.

To live and die in the country, what an enviable lot ! Still, as fly-fishing, in its bare character, would soon cease to interest me as it does, so would the naked charms of the country be alone insufficient to lure me abroad, as often as I could wish, for the refreshment of the eye, the bracing of the nerves,—ay, and the softening of the heart too. It is in the union of the two, Piscator, that the secret lies I told you I would venture to resolve ; always remembering that the pleasure of fly-fishing is not amenable to the drawbacks so many others are that pall upon the taste.

Now, in case, like the old soldier who is said to be so fond of fighting his battles over again, I should be open to the charge of prattling too much

of my piscatorial “rambles and recollections connected with the same river,” I must take leave of thee, sweet Wye, though past pleasures connected with thy waters still crowd thick and fast upon my memory.

There is no river in this part of the country I should select in preference to reside near ; still the stranger may visit it for a week or more together, and leave it grievously disappointed. Like all large rivers I have fished in, it is very uncertain, more especially in respect to trout. Rough fish and lastsprings the tyro may calculate on with certainty in the right season, in sufficient number to bring his hand into play ; but to know the favourite resort of trout, and the best streams, requires a longer acquaintance with the river. There is no better water, that I know of, than that which lies between Bredwardine Bridge and Whitney-flats ; and as no brother of the angle need fear any denial of fair fishing, may all success attend thee, whoever thou art, who may feel inclined to bring to a test the truth of these words !



## CHAPTER V.

“ The voice of the city, the whisper of men,  
I hear them, and hate them, and weary again  
For the lull of the streams—the breath of the brae  
Brought down in a morning of May.”

STODDART.

**W**HO has not heard of certain visitors, whose faces we poor English mortals are doomed to behold, with somewhat of the same feelings a farmer would behold snow in summer—the tax-gatherer, for instance, come to extract the last shilling from our purses ; or tooth-drawer, with his horrid apparatus, the last grinder we have left ? But what is this compared with the visit of one who is bent on dragging you, at a moment’s notice, from a nice, snug, warm bed —a noisy disagreeable fellow, (it may be,) who stands grinning at you with the most mischievously

provoking leer ; enjoying the cruel breaking up of a sweet, sound nap, as a merciless fishwoman does, to judge from her smiling unconcern, the writhings of the poor eel she is in the very act of skinning alive ?

With no very dissimilar sensations, do I well remember, were my friend's repeated visits to my dormitory regarded by me, on the memorable morning we had fixed on for our long-talked-of excursion over the mountains to the Grwyne Fawr.\*

Knowing pretty well what we had to encounter, it was not till after many wise "*pro's and con's,*" after the manner of a certain prophet in the West of veracious repute, respecting the weather, that the final orders were given to the redoubted Richard to put the saddle upon the back of "*Polly,*" that queen of ponies, to help us up the first mountain we knew to be scarcely less abrupt than the side of a house, that only flies

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\* A small and very rapid mountain-stream, impossible to be approached except by a good walker. As it runs clear after the heaviest rain in a few hours, it will generally ensure a good day's sport, when other streams in the neighbourhood are too thick for a fly. The best way to it, is across the mountains by Llanthony Abbey.

and spiders, and such-like insects can comfortably keep their footing on.

And here, kind reader, in these days of free-trade, when cheapness is the "*sine quâ non*" only thought of, (by a certain "*clique*," at least, we wont mention names,) should any of our brethren of the craft swell with their sweet voices the fashionable cry, they may like to know how it is possible, without coming within the verge of "*Martin's Act*," to make one pony answer the purpose of two, in helping them to the place of their destination in a mountainous district. To the inventive faculties of my friend Piscator, is the discovery due, that a pony's tail may be as useful as his back in such an emergency. Hanging by the one, and seated on the other, did we ascend the sides of the aforesaid mountain on the day in question, to the entire satisfaction of all parties, Polly included.

That I am right in asserting thus much, is clear from the verbal assurance of the two-legged animals, and the same measured step and sedate bearing of the four-legged one, which the latter would not have exhibited, had the even tenour of her temper been the least ruffled, as it was when I saw her launch out from behind, to the no small dismay of Richard, when he attempted to deprive

her of the anticipated treat, (the greater in her case as in ours, because it was forbidden,) of cropping the clover of the lawn she had so slyly taken possession of.

We hear much of the instinct of animals ! Is that only instinct that prompts my friend's favourite setter to greet him with so much gladness on ordinary days, wagging his tail as if he would shake it off, and laughing from sheer delight with his merry eyes and good-humoured face ? Is that only instinct that keeps him so quiet on the Sabbath-day, and tells him he must not follow his master as usual, because he is about to enter the sanctuary below, (though, I am sure, if he did, he would comport himself far more decently than the two louts I saw there, reversing the good old saying, and who entered the church to laugh ; and remained—though not to pray !) Surely in all this there is something more than instinct, as well as in the conduct of the sagacious Polly ! Something more than instinct must keep those heels of hers quiet, when she finds that not only has she to carry upwards of eleven stone of human flesh, bones, &c. upon her back, but to drag as much after her suspended by her tail. She kicks not then, gentle reader, because she is a dutiful servant, and

knows she is repaying her master, who provides her with food and lodging. Not so, when her work is done;—she is her own mistress then, and woe betide her master, or thee, good Richard, (as you have experienced,) if you rashly interfere with her.

What would a Londoner of pure cockney blood say, if suddenly transported, some fine morning, from the heart of the smoky city to the top of the black mountain? How would he feel? Like one of the speckled beauties Piscator is so skilful in dragging "*nolens volens*" out of the water to the greensward at his feet; glancing on every side with his restless, unquiet eye, and evidently no less annoyed than amazed, at the unlooked-for change? Or, as we agreed, we felt on the memorable occasion in question?—elevated in sentiment as well as situation, with somewhat of that mental elevation that soars, for a time at least, above the ordinary concerns of life, as well as the private fancies and selfish predilections that will prevail oftener than should be, and prevent personal peace and harmony within.

Is it the sense of labour surmounted, with the agreeable relaxation of thews and sinews, that are called into such unusual play, (not forgetting the

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sport in prospect,) that conduces to this desirable state of mind? Or is there a secret link we little dream of, that connects the material with the immaterial world, and works mysteriously upon the minds of the ardent and imaginative to their especial benefit, chastening with purer and better thoughts their too earthly bias, and disposing them to a nearer sense of the presence of Him whose hand is no less busy in painting the wild-flower at our feet, than in piling mountain upon mountain, to raise our wonder at the one, and delight us with the other?

Be that as it may, I must confess I feel more disposed on the top of such a mountain as this, even after the sport is over, and the legs weary, to look with kindlier sentiments on the faults of others (not excepting Piscator's, for fishermen are not faultless). I must confess I feel a keener sense of my own littleness and extreme insignificance, where all around bespeaks the presence of the Deity and His Majesty in so striking a manner.

That monks should pitch their tents for life in so sweet a retreat as that at Llanthony still occupied by the Abbey's ruins, that detained us in momentary contemplation of the past, is a redeeming point in the estimate one is disposed to take of the

listless lazy crew, who would steal away from the world and its duties, and sanction their moral cowardice with the name of religion. For Nature, it seems, did not spread forth her charms all in vain for them ! It could not have been by chance that the founder of those walls selected a spot few can behold without a passing tribute to its extreme beauty ! Nor can we imagine any one to be utterly steeped in the dregs of superstition, who could make up his mind to turn away for ever from the busy world, reconciled to retirement in so charming a nook.

Who knows, too, if the frequent faults of the goodly men were not fed (excuse the heterodoxy, if there be such a word) by the produce of some monkish brother of the craft ?

For—

What trout could possibly resist  
A little feather, and gold twist,  
Wrapt on the barbed steel  
By Monk, who could at will devise  
A miracle in peasant's eyes  
So wonderful and real ?

The very idea of such a thing goes no little way to disabuse monkery of some slight portion of the disfavour we are inclined to regard it in. So says Piscator at least.

How gallantly we breasted the opposite moun-

tain, leaving Polly behind us safe and sound, tail and all, and how reluctantly we passed the sparkling waters of the Hondu,\* I will not stay to describe.

Nothing interrupted our learned discourse on fly-making, &c. till we found ourselves in the very midst of a disturbed family—not of gipsies, or such like anomalies, but Grouse. All helter-skelter,—it is marvellous how some of the wee, fluttering, frightened creatures escaped being crushed by our feet. (No worse death, perhaps, than being riddled with shot from Squire Broadland's Manton a few weeks hence !) It was pleasant to see Piscator stumbling through the heather in full chase of the old bird that was dodging before him, now running here, and now fluttering there ! Ay, and pleasanter far to hear the chuckle of the latter in the ear of his baffled pursuer, whom he had so dexterously decoyed from his younglings—that merry chuckle that seemed to say in his way in expressive, though not very polished phraseology, “Don’t you wish you may get it ? ”

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\* A very beautiful stream, not only in the fisherman’s eye, but the artist’s. Early in the season, or later after rain, there is no prettier water for a fly; though the trout are small, owing to the incessant poaching from May to Midsummer, and perhaps beyond.

Here we are, however, at the top of the last mountain ; and that little silver thread we catch sight of winding along, far, far below us, is the veritable Grwyne Fawr !

The fatigue of scrambling up a very steep mountain is soon forgotten in the agreeable sensations the easy descent on the other side almost invariably awakens. I was so carried away by the latter in the case in question, and so much exhilarated by what I saw and felt, that I almost fancied I was furnished with a pair of wings, like the solitary kite that was just then sailing over our heads.

Alas ! for us poor mortals to think of flying indeed ! Such a fall over a rolling stone, that was hid in the heather did I experience, to bring me to my senses, that I almost feel inclined now to rub my poor sides and knees at the bare thought of it.

It took me as much by surprise, and cooled my ardour as effectually, though perhaps not so literally, as a fall I had to submit to a twelvemonth before, while fishing in the Clun in Shropshire.

I was standing on the point of a sharp angle of the shore that stretched out into the river, and behind me was a bank more than six feet high. It

was near this spot that I had succeeded in hooking a trout that had baffled me a few hours before in the morning. Directly he was hooked, he made for a large stubb that lay very convenient for him in the middle of the stream. Thinking of nothing at the time but the best way of preventing him from carrying out his intention, I held him with a very short line, and kept gradually drawing back—when lo ! all at once, I reeled and fell backwards into the water. What a glorious sight for the delighted fish to witness ! It was a wonder they did not rush at their enemy shark-like.

The startled fish bewilder'd ran,  
They darted to and fro,  
When with a plunge the fisherman  
Came tumbling down below—  
So large a bait, as sure as Fate,  
Must be a deadly foe.

With curious large round eyes they stare,  
And first due distance keep,  
Then take him for some monster fish,  
Amazed at such a leap !—  
And some would choose to ask what news  
He brings from the far deep ?

Then bolder by degrees they grow—  
Nearer and nearer steal,  
And shake their quivering tails and fins,  
His dubious sides to feel—

Play round his shanks, and mock his pranks—  
Perch, Pike, and tortuous Eel.

But when they saw him sprawl and splash,  
And plunge with floundering limb ;  
Odds-fish ! they thought strange fish they knew,  
But never one like him.  
If these be fins—such spilikins  
Have never learnt to swim.

And round and round and round they swarm,  
Glide proudly, sail and float ;  
And bob their noses to gulp in  
The buttons of his coat—  
Around, around with splash and bound,  
As might their scorn denote.

Ye silly fish, must ye despise  
Th' ungainly thing ye see ?  
“ Fish out of water,” as may chance  
A fish sometime may be,  
And jerked on hook, be sure would look  
As strange a fish as he.

That pocket now you're bobbing at,  
And eke that wondrous book !—  
Within has pictures very bright  
And tempting to the look ;—  
Those pretty flies are glittering lies,  
And every one a hook.

“ Tis wisest their own element  
Both man and fish should keep—  
That on dry ground the fisherman  
More cautiously should creep ;

That both should know a tempting foe,  
And "look before they leap."

A snare is laid for man and fish  
(The moral thus to hit)  
That both are apt to nibble at,  
Then rushing gulp at it.  
There's many a wight expects his bite,  
There's many "a biter bit."

But rhyming catches catch no fish  
And never basket filled,  
For fish don't hear, and never come,  
However charmed or willed,  
Like Ducks in pond of Mistress Bond,  
When wanted to be killed.

In idle rhyme while thus I sport,  
If my advice be true,  
I do disprove what Dr. Watts  
Says idle hands must do—  
Tho' it may be the Trout agree  
In Doctor Watts's view !

For leaving rhymes, from out my book  
I take this little fly,  
And neatly fit him with a hook—  
And "know the reason why"  
I lay aside this scribbling pride—  
I've "other fish to fry."

Have there been times, dear reader, whoever  
you are, when hard pressed in the battle of life,  
you ardently longed to escape from the tumult and

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turmoil around you to a spot of complete quietude and seclusion? Just fancy yourself for a moment, under such circumstances, transported to the banks of the Grwyne Fawr, on some fine morning of one of the last days of expiring Spring! And if such be not, as it were, a sweet oasis for memory to retrace in after years, you are not the man I took you to be. Mountains upon mountains on each side of you, with a narrow valley (treeless, it is true) to divide them, but not the less wrapped in savage beauty for all that. A few sheep with shaggy fleeces, staring, as if their eyes would start out of their heads, at so unusual a spectacle as man, and stamping with their fore-feet, as their custom is, when they would warn their companions of suspected danger. Large masses of rock, reft from the parent bed above, with here and there a wild-flower entirely new to you. And last, though not least, a crystal stream, full of trout, dancing in sparkling merriment at your feet.

Like children's laughter, ere old Time  
Has stripped it of its glee,  
That would, alas! but little chime  
With life's reality--

Steals on the angler's ear the sound  
Of waters at his feet,

“ BANKS OF THE GRWYNE FAWR.”





That gambol on with many a bound,  
The distant sea to meet.

Burnished with gold, and green, and blue,  
The whirling bubbles gleam,  
And burst not yet within his view,  
Like many a past day-dream.

Myriads of insects—happy things !  
Sail softly humming by ;  
And every note each wild bird sings  
Is fraught with melody !

Shall troubled thoughts disturb him then,  
Far from the sickening strife  
That fends, alas ! his fellow men  
Sad down the stream of life ?

Surely no heart, however sad,  
Could still unsolaced be,  
Or feel, where all around was glad,  
No touch of sympathy !

Oh ! such waterfalls, and deep, black-looking  
pools beneath, as would make you convulsively  
clutch your basket to speculate if it could possibly  
hold all you meant to catch !

If you are a brother of the angle, as I take you  
to be, you know as well as I can tell you, that of  
all uncertain things in this most uncertain world,  
there is nothing more so than the anticipated re-  
sults of a day's fly-fishing. I must inform you,

then, that on the day in question for the first two hours, if I had one "*rise*" I may say I had considerably more than two hundred, and only landed some twenty trout. The stream, which is very rapid, and the wind, were dead against me. Consequently before my flies touched the water, they curled in towards me with the whole collar ; and strike as you may in such a case, it is not of the slightest use : generally speaking, if you do hook a trout, you have to thank his voraciousness for it,—not your skill. The best plan, I believe, to adopt under such untoward circumstances, is to throw underhand with as short a line as possible, and always at the opposite side of the stream in the slack water.

Such a lively set I never before had the pleasure to fall in with as these same trout of the Grwyne Fawr ;—the first cast in a likely pool, and you are sure to have half-a-dozen candidates for the tempting morsel before their eyes. And yet so nimble are they and quick-sighted, that they detect the cheat within a hair's breadth of their ruin, give one little tug at the hackle, (most probably,) and you see them no more.

Sometimes, it is true, when they turn away thus in disgust, flapping the false thing ycleped a fly with

their tails, their joy is turned into sorrow by a little quickness on your part with your hand and eye. Hooked by the tail or in the skin of the belly, a trout not exceeding half a pound in weight will thus delude you into the idea that you have hold of a monster at least. Rushing up the centre of the stream, if one be near, he fights so gallantly for his life, that you cannot help feeling a certain kind of twinge within, when you discover all the splutter to have been caused by so small and plucky a creature.

Why the trout should be so unusually plentiful in the Grwyne Fawr is owing, I believe, in no small degree to the nature of its rocky uneven bed. No net could possibly sweep it. You, who are accustomed to spend hundreds in trying to preserve, (too often in vain,) study Dame Nature's example in this respect. A few deep holes cut in the bed of your water, and some stones, sufficiently large not to be washed aside by the torrents of winter, judiciously scattered about, would preserve your fish far more securely than the expensive employment of half-a-dozen keepers.

What a sharp look out must a trout keep from behind one of the large stones, he so loves early in the season to make his lair of! The flies, lying

and dead, sail by at least a hundred knots an hour, and yet, no sooner does the right one come, than up dashes the tyrant from below, and takes in the favourite morsel as easily as if he were in some still, unruffled deep.

One good fish only I managed to hook in the neighbourhood of one of these large stones in the Grwyne Fawr. I saw his white belly for an instant, when he took a fancy to my second fly ; and the next moment up springs the gentleman with the speckled robe into the air, as if he meant to fly as well as swim. Oh ! thinks I, if I can but land you safe and sound, how I shall chuckle over my more skilful brother below. Now he shakes his head, as if he would shake off the odious barb—a real sneckbend, my friend, it wont do :—now he descends to the bottom, and pulls with all his might and main ! Well in hand though I have you, you are a noble fellow, and will beat me yet ! By all that's unfortunate, and so he has ! That vile gut gave way in the last death-struggle ; and all I have to do, I conclude, is to take my good brother's advice, and not lose my temper, though I have lost my fish.

Here I am, however, at our meeting-place exactly at four, with two or three under fifty trout

in my basket. "No bad sport," you will perhaps exclaim! And I agree with you, supposing I had fished any other water. But this lovely Grwyne, a day or two after heavy rain, was there ever such a stream for fish?

Hulloa! Piscator, is that you? And you call this punctuality! You richly deserve to be pitched into—not with the fist of violence, (that would not be clerical,) but with the tongue of wrathfulness. So glorious a day, however, have I enjoyed, that I have not the heart to scold.

Oh! you murderer! You have indeed a basket full; and some of them good fish. One hundred and twelve trout between us.

By the way, you remember the three flies I made yesterday,—the little May-fly,\* down-hill, and buzz, with dark red hackle and yellowish body, small, but very rough? To the last, quite contrary to your opinion, thirty trout at least have fallen victims. The water I found a little tinged, as I expected, and a combination of red and yellow proved irresistible.

Farewell, sweet Grwyne, for another twelve-

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\* No greater mistake can be made than to use large May-flies; unless the water be very high and thick.

month ! and should nothing unforeseen occur, I will visit thee again.

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Permit me to ask you, good reader, if you were ever in a mist ?—I mean not such an one as every poor wretch, I believe, who is bewildered out of the little modicum of brains he may happen to possess, is occasionally involved in—an Englishman, for instance, stepping on shore at Calais for the first time, and surrounded by a host of chattering Frenchmen, without knowing one word of their language—or a nervous young woman, who has seen better days, on trial in an infant school-room, endeavouring, though in vain, to stop the laughing, screaming, crying medley, from a hundred little mouths, she finds herself serenaded with for the first time ;—or an indulgent parent, trying to decipher yesterday's debate on a question of confidence in her Majesty's ministers, with his pets around him, frisking in all manner of queer ways, and uttering all sorts of strange sounds, with mamma looking quietly on ? No, no, not such a mist as this, how delectable soever it may be ! But a real mountain-mist that, gathering with ominous blackness in the distance, approached you nearer and nearer every step you took, till you found yourself fairly involved in it !

It was just such a mist that overtook us, not a little, I must confess, to our dismay, when we had nearly climbed two-thirds over the first mountain we had to cross on our return. We knew ourselves to be many miles from home, with not a fraction of our fare left. What were we to do in such an emergency? "Go ahead," I fancy I hear some courageous voice exclaiming, "go ahead, to be sure." Yes, and tumble head-foremost over a frightful precipice—that would indeed be going ahead with a vengeance!

After some hesitation, we determined to proceed as nearly as possible in the direction we had already taken; still ascending the mountain, though in a flanting way, concluding that when we had persevered some time, we should either catch a faint glimpse of the brow of the mountain, which we kept in mind as a kind of guide; or else, from the nature of the ground, be able to guess at its position with sufficient accuracy for our purpose. Continuing our course for some time with this intention, our doubts began to ooze out bit by bit, in a running-fire sort of conversation like this.

*Clericus.* I say, Piscator, this *is* pleasant.

*Piscator.* Not very pleasant will you find it, my dear fellow, if you have to wander about this

mountain all night ; or to lie down and sleep, like Jacob of old, with the bare stones for your pillow.

*Clericus.* You don't think we are going right, then ?

*Piscator.* Half an hour ago I thought so, but I am not quite so sure now.

*Clericus.* A pretty sort of a fellow you are to set up for a guide. You know the nature of this wild country so well, that you ought to be able to smell out your way like a dog.

*Piscator.* I tell you what—we ought to go straight up the mountain now, as I suspect we are not far from the brow that dips a little, as we remarked this morning.

*Clericus.* You are wrong, depend upon it ; we must still keep bearing to the right. If we go straight up as you propose, we shall have to scale one precipice, and then most likely break our necks on the other side.

*Piscator.* Well, have your own way. I don't at all like the appearance of it. I never remember being caught in so intense a mist before.

*Clericus.* The farther we proceed, the more do I begin to doubt which of us is in the right. Suppose we split the difference, (as the vulgar saying is,) and now take the direction you advised some time ago ?

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*Piscator.* Better late than never ; though we ought to have done it before.

Some such conversation as this passed, when our situation was really becoming rather a critical one. After wandering about for some time, we began to be a little disheartened, though we had contrived to pass in safety over the top of the first mountain, and to descend the other side. All the pleasant little incidents of the day were now forgotten ; and we felt a strong inclination to empty our baskets of their contents, so heavily did they begin to press upon our shoulders.

It is very singular how entire a revulsion of feeling will a slight change of circumstances immediately call forth ! Exulting an hour or two before in our success at the Grwyne Fawr, perhaps, had our load been as much again when we started on our return, we should have submitted to it, as a matter of course. But now, how devoutly did we wish the fish anywhere than in our baskets, though we had not the heart to throw them away.

Oh ! what wondrous power does the mind possess over these dull bodies of ours ! It is not learning, it is not cleverness, it is not courage, it is not industry, that will always succeed in overcoming difficulties. Elasticity of mind, I believe to be the

true secret of success in the majority of cases—elasticity of mind that can make up for deficiencies, by assuming they do not exist ; and where all is dark and gloomy, still casting in a sweet ray of lingering sunlight.

To make our walk more cheerful, I presume, my companion commenced relating stories ; how some had wandered all night on the mountains, and recovered not from their fatigue and fright for days and days to come ; and how others, still worse, had been lost to their friends for ever on this side the grave ; having, it is supposed, missed their footing, and been dashed to atoms down some frightful precipice ! Very interesting talk, no doubt, under any other than our present circumstances ! All the while, be it remembered, we were shut out from the glorious prospect, as well as almost from the fresh, pure oxygen, by the choking, blinding mist, which had become so intense that, to all appearances, we could grasp it in our hands.

At length to our inexpressible delight we discovered a well-beaten track, and that not by sheep only, but by some of our own species also. After stumbling along for some time down this track, we arrived at the bottom of the mountain ; and strange to say, the mist seemed to be then stealing

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gradually off its sides, assuming here and there wild fantastical shapes, such as an imaginative beholder might well convert into monsters with many heads, and mail-clad warriors at hand, St. George-like, to charge with their vizors down, and their spears at rest ! Or fairer and softer scenes the fleecy mist might be made to represent, with no great stretch of mental fantasy either ;—the landscape, for instance, with its many sweet accompaniments of light and shade ;—or the wide-spread lake, slightly burnished with gold, as it just caught the sinking sun-beam ;—or trees clustered thick together, and garnished with their summer foliage ! Such, and a thousand other airy shapes, might the evanescent mist be made to picture, as it rolled away, volume after volume, before our eyes.

Not at all sorry were we to find ourselves, after all our troubles, at the bottom of the mountain safe and sound ; though where the lane we reached would lead us, we were in utter ignorance.

Most fortunately the smoke from a cottage-chimney caught our eyes, and the merry laughter of little children told us that we were not far off the abode of one who could no doubt direct us where to go. What was our annoyance on being assured that we had strayed from two to three miles

beyond the right road, and were fully that distance then from Llanthony,—I will leave the reader to conceive !

When we caught sight of the ruins again, standing out with their dim, distant outline, there was a gloom about them that harmonised not a little with the departing twilight, as well as our own spirits, depressed, I must confess, far more than weariness of body would account for.

What was passing in “Polly’s” head I do not pretend to say; but the sagacious creature certainly looked more knowing than usual, when she was brought out of the good farmer’s snug stable;—implying, perhaps, that had we followed her example, and remained to enjoy the kind hospitality that was offered us, it would have been wiser than wandering over unknown mountains, and losing ourselves in mist and mire ! For once, “Polly,” I must take leave to dispute the soundness of thy views, if such were their bearing. Inactivity and sloth may suit some quadrupeds like thyself, (the long-eared ones more especially;) but man, man must have incessant movement, though it be quite contrary at times to his inclinations, or he would be miserable.

What cared we for the mountain-mist; what

for the walk from seven in the morning till ten at night ; when the welcome of as kind a hostess as ever put up without a murmur with fishermen's caprices, met us on the threshold ? To sit down hungry as hunters and despatch for a time all in the eating way that came within our reach, was a practical proof that fatigue had interfered not with our appetites.

*Piscator.* I am rejoiced to hear the sound of your voice again, my good friend. I calculate (as brother Jonathan would say) you have had quite enough of the *Grwyne Fawr* ?

*Clericus.* Not a bit of it. At one time, certainly, when we were both at a "*nonplus*," I felt not quite so comfortable as I do now ; but as for the mountain-mist, I would not have escaped it on any consideration, at least, now it is past.

*Piscator.* Suppose we have a peep at the fish ?

*Clericus.* By all means.

*Piscator.* No bad dish in point of number, at any rate.

*Clericus.* They are small, certainly, but such pullers for their size I never before met with ; and what a peculiar colour ! They looked on first coming out of the water more like living lumps of Californian gold, than anything else.

*Piscator.* A different species, perhaps, from the ordinary trout we are accustomed to see.

*Clericus.* I believe the soil through which the water flows has a great influence on the colour, as well as growth of trout. I remember three years ago fishing not far from the French prison in a sparkling little brook on Dartmoor, when the first trout I hooked I mistook for a fish I had never seen before, until I took it in my hands and saw it was a trout, though almost black. If you could transplant some of the black fellows from the same French prison waters to the Grwyne Fawr, they would soon exchange their prison-dress, I believe, for the like golden garments ;—for why should not trout follow the fashion of the day as well as you ?

*Piscator.* I believe you are right. For one thing is pretty certain ; and that is, that the black peat of Dartmoor communicates its unsightly colour to the trout ; and some property of the soil must tinge the trout of the Grwyne Fawr with bright yellow.

*Clericus.* If you wish to say more on this subject, had you not better defer it to a less unseasonable hour ? It is more than half-past twelve, and later than this no Piscator ought to keep out of his bed,

particularly after such a walk. One word more while I light this candle ;—you may say what you please about not going again to the Grwyne Fawr but a day more replete with incident, and incident too that keeps the mind on the full stretch of excitement, I have never before enjoyed. A walk by a lazy river, though it be in the height of the May-fly season, and the trout flopping about every side of you—can it be compared to such a day's adventure as we have had ? However,

I wish thee heartily good night !  
And may you start not in affright,  
With tottering step, and puzzled brain  
Caught in the mountain mist again !



## CHAPTER VI.

“ Away to the brook,  
All your tackle out-look,  
Here's a day that is worth a year's wishing.  
See that all things be right,  
For 'twould be a spite  
To want tools when a man goes a-fishing.”

COTTON.

*Clericus.*

**H**ERE we are at last, Piscator, embarked in this “ *Shakibus*” of yours, which of all vehicles I have ever ventured in, rattles over the ruts and ridges in the finest possible style. Whatever benefit it may confer on the digestive organs is, I can feelingly confess, at the cost of considerable bumping and thumping of the outward man.

I scarcely ever enter a machine of this kind without chuckling over an adventure that befell me many years ago at Oxford. I had engaged to start

at nine o'clock from the bottom of the High Street in a dog-cart snipe shooting with a friend, who could have rivalled the fat boy in *Pickwick* (had that distinguished young gentleman been in existence) in fleshly proportions at least, though his opposite in everything else. Active, energetic, and irritable in the extreme; woe betide any one who came in his way when he was exasperated. A blow from his fist, I verily believe, would have felled an ox.

To stow ourselves and our paraphernalia away to our satisfaction, to say nothing of the four dogs we had to cram in behind, took us no little time. Alas! for the reverses of us poor mortals! We had scarcely got off, and commenced rattling beautifully along over the stones—when lo! all at once, my companion gave me a tremendous poke in the side with his elbow, asking me if I heard that noise? “What noise?” I most innocently replied. But before he had time to answer, smash went the axle-tree in two, and out shot we head foremost on each side of the broken-down vehicle into the middle of the street.

Had my very life depended on my putting on a serious face, I must have gone out of the world in a merry mood then. Incased in a thick great-

coat, I sustained no damage, not even a bruise. Very different, however, was it with my unfortunate partner in misfortune. Shaken by the fall, and covered with mud,—to look round and see me absolutely splitting my sides with laughter;—Oh! if the crowd had not gathered round, and the cry of Proctor been raised, he would, I fear, have rushed at me to inflict the summary chastisement of pounding me to powder with his enormous fists. As it was, he contented himself with shouting after me, at the top of his voice, as I ran down the street to my rooms, “ You abominable block-head, you are always laughing! ”

“ *Always laughing!* ” And why not, Piscator, seize each sunny interval that offers, to throw off the burthens that will occasionally bear upon all our shoulders, do what we will to prevent it? Besides, an aptitude to see things in so strange a light as to divert the thoughts for a time into a totally different train (all the better for being a mirthful one) is, I am convinced, as bracing to the mind, as change of air is to the health.

*Piscator.* I quite agree with you, and to prove my sincerity, suppose I pitch you out the first favourable opportunity that offers, in order to laugh at you!

*Clericus.* You forget we are no longer undergraduates, and that such pranks would hardly add to the respect I confess I do not like to see forfeited towards any of our cloth.

*Piscator.* You talk as if I really meant to put my proposal into practice ; and yet you ought to know me better than to suppose it possible I could hurt a single hair of such a true Waltonian head as that on your shoulders.

*Clericus.* By the way, Piscator, how kindly those two quaint-looking old women at the turnpike seemed to look at you ! What have you done to get into their good graces—no very easy task, I imagine ?

*Piscator.* Nothing more than you would do yourself ; I leave them a few trout occasionally when I return from the Cap.\*

*Clericus.* I was thinking the other day when we emptied the contents of our baskets into two of your largest dishes, what on earth you could do with so many fish !

*Piscator.* We parsons, in spite of the fat Livings

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\* Between Hereford and Abergavenny there is an Inn called the Cap, situated almost on the banks of the Monnow, and kept by very civil people.

some of our sapient legislators are so fond of providing us with, at least in their speeches, are, I suspect, a needy race. And though this does not grieve me, as far as I am concerned, it does most deeply sometimes, when I am compelled to witness pinching poverty, without being able to relieve it. My poor parishioners seem to know by instinct when I go out with my rod ; for I am quite sure the next morning to have plenty of candidates for any favours in the fish way. Of all the pleasures you have said and sung, I believe, of fly-fishing, not one in my opinion comes up to that of being able “ to feed the hungry.”

*Clericus.* And yet how many there are who condemn a Clergyman, ay, even for occasionally plying the gentle art.

*Piscator.* Yes, and how many there are who think it sinful to *laugh*, in spite of your sage doctrine about its bracing up the nerves, &c.

*Clericus.* I have never yet in my experience met with a Puritan of this stamp, who was not as proud as Lucifer. Weak and wayward as we all are, more or less, for a man to invest himself in a certain system (as it were) of his own devising, like a chrysalis in a cocoon, and extend to no one beyond its confines aught more of courtesy and

kindness than a shrug of the shoulders, or a toss of the head, I pity him from my very soul !

That Bedlamite of old, Praise-God-Barebones, and prince of Puritans, the fanatical Oliver,—what more instructive lessons could two individuals have handed down for our warning of the folly and mischief of such pride as this, when carried to its utmost extent.

Talk of a bull in a china-shop, indeed ! Poor inseniate brute ! he is only following the bias of his natural instinct of self-preservation. But for a man like Cromwell, of undoubted talent, and dauntless courage, to tear down for his pleasure and pastime the beautiful in art, and exquisite in taste, and noble in conception !—alas, for such bigotry as his !\*

*Piscator.* My dear fellow, do let the dead rest in peace. What connection there is between a poor Piscator and a prince of Puritans, as you call the defunct Oliver, I am at a loss to understand.

*Clericus.* Only this, that the habit many per-

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\* “ The civil fury of the time  
Made sport of sacrilegious crime ;  
For dark fanaticism rent  
Altar and screen and ornament.”

SIR W. SCOTT.

sons indulge of judging others, especially in matters of religion, is the obvious result of the worst species of pride that, beginning with the churlish condemnation of an innocent recreation like ours, is satisfied not till it ends in committing some far more material mischief.

*Piscator.* Here we are, safe and sound, at the bridge I told you of; and as I intend driving on to the Cap, and fishing up, we will meet again about the middle of the day. Such streams as you will come to will, I know, delight you beyond measure. Fare thee well, for the present.

\* \* \* \*

The reader, I fear, will not think very favourably of two friends thus separating as usual when they approach the water-side! But if the stream be sufficiently wide for two rods, it rarely happens that both sides are equally favourable for the two anglers.

It is from no absolute love of solitude that my friend and myself thus separate, but, generally speaking, from necessity. Companionship by the river's side with one of congenial tastes, is not the least pleasure that attends the practice of the gentle art. Still, in a fine spring or summer morning for a sense of loneliness to steal over one who thus

haunts the streams—how impossible ! Of the infinite variety of sounds that fall upon the ear, there is scarcely one that is not very welcome. The language of the busy animal world, if not quite so intelligible as that of our own species, is almost invariably pitched in a key that is musical to the ear. Besides, there is no cry of pain, no wailing of distress, no murmur of ingratitude ! On the contrary, from the hum of the insect ephemera, whose little span is confined to the continuance of a single day's sunshine, to the wild whistle of the blackbird, and laughter of the large wood-pecker, in his gorgeous garb of green, without the aid of the linguist to interpret their exact language, we can learn enough of it to understand that it is the eloquent, though humble expression of happiness. And what heart can remain for a moment unmoved by such melody, without cordially sympathising in concord with it ?

On the day in question I found myself by the side of the Monnow, one of the most inviting-looking rivers (the Teme, near Leintwardine, excepted) that it has ever been my good fortune to throw a fly on.

The very first stream I came to quite verified my late companion's words, and delighted

me indeed. There was first the wild rushing of the water over a natural declivity in the bed of the river, rendered still more rapid by the temporary check it received from a few fragments of rock that kept their place there in spite of the winter's torrents ;—then the rolling of the stream over the pebbly bottom, that roughened the surface, though with less of the wild fury that fumed and fretted above ;—and then the gradual subsidence of the whole into a wide expanse of unruffled, though still swift-running water.

Of the eye, the centre, and the tail of a stream like this, I usually find the fish in May congregating in the last. Still, it is not seldom that you fall in with a trout (almost invariably a good one) in the very eye of the boiling water.

Though a new river to a fly-fisher is like novelty in almost everything else, very captivating to the imagination, the first throw on the one in question disturbed me not a little in the dream of the mighty doings I was about to achieve. I had just wetted my line in the slack water, and commenced with, as I fancied, a very skilful lodgment of my flies in an eddy caused by one of the large stones that appeared above the surface. For an instant I caught sight of the white belly of a

trout, as he turned to have a dash at my second fly, when, to my extreme discomfiture, I saw the collar sweeping down some yards below, with the trout (for what I knew) ferrying it on its course ! The flies I had taken such pains to fabricate the evening before—the gut stained so beautifully, and fined off so admirably, each link less than the other —how provoking to see it all whirling away, and to know that a good half hour must be consumed in preparing the like again !

Never go out without duplicates from the fly-top to the collar, as far as your tackle is concerned. The slightest twist in the dry gut will be enough to make it unsafe, particularly if you hook a fish before it is thoroughly well soaked. And as it is no trouble to carry two or three extra collars furnished with the flies in season, if you should fall into the like predicament with myself, you must expect to receive no commiseration from me.

I have scarcely ever heard a fisherman, when speaking of a lost fish, describe it otherwise than a marvel in size at least ! This arises, I conclude, partly from the pleasing habit imagination has of clothing the shadow of a desirable object in still brighter hues than actually embellish the substance ! And partly from a fond feeling we love to fall back

upon, that, though the fish is gone—there can be no mistake about that ! he was so fine a fellow (so to speak) that he fought far beyond a fish's usual efforts ! thus ennobling the victorious fish, as a sop to the wounded pride of the discomfited fisherman.

Without this comfortable feeling to console me, I had a strong suspicion that the trout that did me so much damage was a diminutive little fellow after all. At any rate, diminutive or not, he taught me a lesson that I shall be in no hurry to forget.

When I rose from my pebbly seat, and commenced “*flogging*” the water again, I must confess I was grievously disappointed at the result for the next two hours. Better water there could not be, or a more favourable day, (especially at intervals when the sun hid his face a bit behind a cloud,) and yet I could not get the fish to move. Only four trout, just large enough not to throw in again, lay at the bottom of my basket—three of which I killed with the Marlow-buzz, or cocha-bonddu, though it was full early for his appearance on the water—and one with a yellow-dun, toned down a bit with a little more blue about the body than usual.

I caught sight of the Alder fluttering about in

a very tempting manner before the sharp eyes of the speckled gentry beneath. And very well it was for me that I took the hint ; for five of the seven trout that fell to my lot during the next hour, were victims to the seductions of an artificial fly of this kind which I had put on—three of which must have weighed about two pounds.

The pleasure I was beginning to experience from the improved appearance of the inside of my basket, was by no means increased by an accident that happened to me, worse if anything than the first.

Just below where I was standing, I saw the water curling in that quiet, circular manner, that told me pretty truly that there was a good trout at hand, waiting, perhaps, for one of my flies. I threw just above him in a wave of the water he had left in sucking in some insect for his dinner (or luncheon, more correctly speaking, at such a time of the day). Up he came to do the same, apparently, to my second dropper ; when in my great anxiety at the sight of so fine a fish, I struck a moment too soon, before the fly in fact was in his mouth.

Disappointed, but not daunted at this, I walked quietly away from the water-side to follow my finny

friend's example ; though the substitution of bread and cheese for insect food, was more to my taste, washed down with a little cold whiskey-punch, (real Roscrea,) a beverage no brother of the angle should be without on similar expeditions, if not too potent.

After the refreshment of the inner man, I was soon on the move again to try another turn with my friend below. Three times did I throw over him, and was just on the eve of walking away when I found he had taken my stretcher (the Alder above-mentioned) under water, and had hooked himself. What a rush he made up the stream past me, to reach, I imagined, some well-known lair of his ! Now or never was the time to stop him, or good bye to him, and some of my tackle too in all probability ! To wind up the line immediately I felt the slightest slackening of his onward course, was my only chance ;—and well was Copham's wood tried, when the baffled trout found he must retrace his course, and the tough little rod bent almost double ! Assured that the worst was past, I very soon after had the satisfaction of seeing the tired trout almost motionless at the foot of the bank I was standing on. As far as I could judge the fish was more than a pound, and as yellow as

gold. As he lay so quiet and I had no landing-net, I tried to lift him, trusting to the strength of the rod. When lo ! one struggle was enough, and snap went the top just above the ferule, and down dropped the trout into the water, and, still worse, so far was he recovered by the change of circumstances, that he dashed off and broke his hold.

A pretty predicament to be in on the banks of such a river as the Monnow in the middle of the day.—A broken top, and no spare one at hand ! If you have one drop—only one of the pure Waltonian blood in your veins, the bare recital of such a trial will awaken your sympathy !

Such a chapter of accidents was this day's fishing evidently to be ! It took me no little time to get the ferule clear again, to the extreme danger of some of my teeth ; and then cobble the broken top in such a way as to enable me to continue using my rod.

It is madness to attempt lifting a trout a fraction above half a pound out of the water in this way. Nor was this the first disaster of the kind I had met with, entirely from my repugnance to carry a landing-net.

After much valuable time thus needlessly squandered, I began moving on down the stream, de-

lighted with the scenery, which struck me as unusually soft and lovely, from the contrast, perhaps, to that I had encountered a few days before in the mountain-district, when the most comical spectacle I had seen for many a long day arrested my attention.

In the centre of the next stream, as far as I could see indistinctly, stood a tall, thin object, that might at a distance have been very well mistaken for a huge heron in shape, at least, if not in colour! What could it be? Not a fisherman, surely! for who of my worthy brethren is ever seen by the waterside, clothed in black from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet? And yet, sure enough, the fable object, on my hastening on, turned out to be an aspirant, if not more, to the honour of confraternity with us.

Sweltering in the heat, for the sun was broiling hot, and shining in full force on his back, he seemed to be working very hard with his rod, though, as I suspected, to no very profitable purpose.

*Clericus.* The fish don't rise very well to-day.

*Sable Gentleman.* Confound them! here have I been fishing all the way from the Cap, with my friend in the stream below, and not one trout have I got hold of for my pains; nor has he either, I

believe ! My firm opinion is, in spite of what the keeper has just assured me, there are no fish in the river.

*Clericus.* Oh ! I can rectify that point to your entire satisfaction, if you will step on shore and look into my basket.

*Sable Gentleman.* You don't mean to tell me you have caught those fish with a fly this morning ?

*Clericus.* Ay, and some more too, I trust, ere this, had I not been delayed by two unlucky accidents I met with !

*Sable Gentleman.* Well, that is most extraordinary ! Here have I been fishing since nine this morning without cessation, and I verily believe, not a single trout has even looked at my flies, to say nothing of swallowing them.

*Clericus.* Will you permit me to *look* at your flies ? Not unlikely ones either ; though the blue is a trifle too dark. I don't know that I can furnish you with better, but you are welcome to try any you prefer in my book. If I may be so bold —when I saw you in the middle of the stream, I felt sure your sport could not have been much. You should keep away as much as possible from the water, which is rather low, and as clear as

crystal ; whereas not only do the fish see you where you stand, but your shadow scares them away in double quick time.

*Sable Gentleman.* I never thought of that, but I believe you are right.

*Clericus.* Your friend too below I see is in the water, and more than that, has a green coat and white trouzers on,—no more likely colours to catch the sharp eyes of the trout. If the sky be overcast, you can take liberties with the fish, but now it is a totally different thing. Let me recommend you under present circumstances to fish “*fine and far off*,” and always avoid, if possible, having the sun at your back, or your whole shadow must fall upon the water.

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In spite of my advice I felt pretty sure when I left the sable and green gentlemen, that the colour of the latter’s coat was no bad index of their knowledge of the gentle art. To think of approaching within ken of a trout in such a dazzling and conspicuous garb !

In nine cases out of ten when a light basket tells too true a tale of a day’s fly-fishing, I believe it is owing to a want of caution in keeping as much as possible out of sight. There is no colour so little

conspicuous as gray ; or so much so as black, or green, or white.

After my new acquaintances had been splashing up the water, scaring the trout at their uncouth appearance, I sat down to ruminate for a few minutes under a large beech tree, before trying my luck in the magnificent succession of streams I saw playing before me.

Of the myriads of insects humming and buzzing, flitting and floating around, I missed the May-fly, in his glossy coat of green, from the happy assemblage.

Perhaps I was a little too harsh in my suspicions of the two luckless fishermen, I still caught sight of labouring on as hard as ever, in reference to their want of skill ! For there is no more difficult a time, I believe, to know what fly to select, with the best chance of success, than the few days that precede the May-fly season. The fish are usually accused then of being sulky, and all "*flogging*" seems thrown away in the endeavour to bring them into better humour.

What their real feelings may be, sulky or otherwise, I pretend not to unfold ; but I rather imagine the reason they refuse to rise less freely than usual, is from their being engaged much more to their satisfaction at the bottom of the water.

In all rivers and brooks where the stone-fly is to be found in abundance, as well as the May-fly, there is a board spread most bountifully with the choicest dainties, consisting of the cadis and cod-bait, which represent these insects, and expose themselves to the quick eyes of the trout in their preparations to put on their last and best attire.

Such a mighty stirring of insect life is there below, and such a profusion of fat things, that the fish become like aldermen after a turtle-feast, indisposed to touch anything besides, unless of the most recherché kind. Now is the time for the fly-fisher to display all his skill, if he would furnish his basket with a few of the finny tribe.

At such a season how often have I been grievously disappointed, when all seemed in my favour—the weather and the water unexceptionable—to find how little notice the trout would condescend to take of my best flies. Now is the time for all the patience you are master of, and perseverance. To these virtues must I attribute more than once a bad beginning followed by a better end.

If the water will allow, the flies I used on the present occasion have often before stood my friends—the Alder, Cochabondu, and Yellow Dun—sometimes varied by the Red-spinner. There is no more difficult fly to imitate than the latter, nor

a better one, especially in the evening after a close, sultry day.

When the two fishermen above were quite out of sight, such a delicious repose seemed to settle down on the whole scene, undisturbed save by the rippling of the water ;—the soft and scarcely perceptible hum of the insect world ;—and the familiar note of the robin, who seeks the society of man more than any other of his wild companions ; that I was irresistibly led to give way to a dreamy state of reverie that took entire possession of my senses for a time.

It was sweet, though sad, to wander back, far back, in thought to days, that the more they recede in the distance, the more invariably do they gather a stronger hold upon us with the silken ties that, woven first perhaps by the hand of childhood, have remained ever since unravelled, till we find them in after life still clinging to our hearts with a gordian knot, that the hand of death can only tear asunder !

It seemed but yesterday that, let loose on a May-morning with a host of school-fellows on the banks of the Corve,\* I took my first lesson in fly-fishing

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\* The Corve is a small river, or brook, that falls into the Teme, in the neighbourhood of Ludlow.

—the only one, I believe, of the whole party who persevered after the first hour's fishing, with no fish to reward us for our pains.

“ Embathed in beauty, pass'd before my sight  
Like blossoms that with sunlight shut and ope,  
The half-lost dreams of many a holiday,  
In boyhood spent on that blue river-side  
With those whose names, even now, as alien sounds  
Ring in the ear, though then our cordial arms  
Enwreathed each other's necks, while on we roam'd  
Singing, or silent, pranksome, ne'er at rest,  
As life were but a jocund pilgrimage,  
Whose pleasant wanderings found a goal in heaven.”

DELTA.

“ A pretty sort of a fellow you are to propose meeting half-way down the stream at luncheon-time ! ” were words that startled me not a little, as I lay spell-bound under the old beech-tree. Just below stood Piscator revelling in the lovely stream I had fixed my affections on, I knew not how long since, for the day was dancing on towards a close, before I thought it much more than half over.

It was consolatory to hear my matter-of-fact friend coincide with me in one thing, and that was,—that the trout were unusually shy ; though between us we had contrived to make a pretty fair

THE ANGLER'S REVERIE.





show of their finny excellencies upon the green sward. Every stream, he assured me, he had worked well in coming up ; accordingly I was quite ready to accede to his proposal to walk on towards the road, and meet the carriage.

*Piscator.* You have not told me yet what you think of the Monnow.

*Clericus.* Think of it ! Why, that a sweeter stream there cannot be.

*Piscator.* I have been with one of the keepers all the morning, and he says, he never remembers so many fish in the river as now, though very few have been caught the last few days.

*Clericus.* That, I suppose, has dispersed the fishermen. Only two have I fallen in with the whole of the day, and such comical fellows !—they were enough of themselves to frighten the fish into fits.

*Piscator.* A score of rods have I seen here before now, hard at work on the same day.

*Clericus.* There I think your club is in error. I should strongly recommend you to reduce your sixty members by degrees to half the number, and increase your subscriptions in proportion. Or, if not, make a rule that no stranger shall fish alone, that is, unaccompanied by the member who provided him with a ticket.

*Piscator.* When you become a member next year, you can propose any new rules you please. But you have told me nothing yet of your adventures.

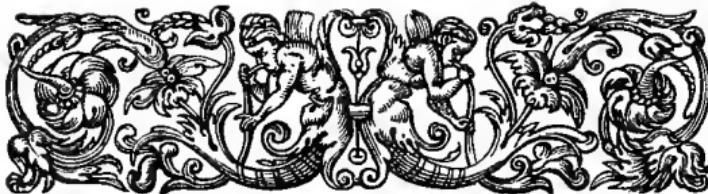
*Clericus.* You may in truth call them adventures! Some of the rough and some of the smooth things of this life as usual—but what with the enchanting scenery, and the delicious weather, the day has seemed shorn of its due proportions—it really has gone like a shadow.

“ Life is a dream, whose seeming truth  
Is moralised in age and youth.  
When all the comforts man can share  
As wandering as his fancies are ;  
Till in a mist of dark decay  
The dreamer vanish quite away.”

BISHOP KING.

## APPENDIX.





## APPENDIX.

“ To frame the little animal, provide  
All the gay hues that wait on female pride ;  
Let nature guide thee ; sometimes golden-wire  
The shining bellies of the fly require ;  
The peacock’s plumes thy tackle must not fail,  
Nor the dear purchase of the fable’s tail ;  
Each gaudy bird some tender tribute brings,  
And lends the growing insect proper wings :  
Silks of all colours must their aid impart,  
And every fur promote the fisher’s art.”

GAY.

**I**NSTRUCTION, gentle reader, can scarcely approach you in any form, except to a certain extent through a *dry* ordeal, however paradoxical such an expression may appear in speaking of fly-fishing.

If you are a complete novice, I must recommend to your notice certain indispensable requisites, however closely I may seem to tread upon the heels of a certain lady, a thorough mistress of the culinary art, who, you are aware, cautions you very kindly to be sure and catch your hare before you think of cooking it. To tell you that a rod, a reel, a line, if you would be a fly-fisher, are

appendages you cannot dispense with, will not, however, content me in your case, without a hint or two as to their nature and use.

You have seen, haply with some surprise, how reluctant an acquaintance of the fine old English gentleman stamp (less common, alas! than formerly) has been, to cast off that part of his clothing yclept a hat, though scarcely a vestige remained of what it once was, when it came so sleek and shapely into his possession! Something of peculiar value must have belonged to it thus to endear it so much in the days of its decrepitude. Habit, I would suggest, might, in no slight degree, have been at the bottom of the secret—habit that so soon changes the very cut and shape of deformity itself into beauty's nicest proportions—habit, that first familiarises and then endears things that we originally thought nothing of—habit, without whose society we should be indeed a strange set, more so in fact than at present—eternally restless, eternally bent on change, and eternally unhappy, I believe, in consequence. Thus it must have been habit (I can attribute it to nothing else) that fixed so forcibly in my affections the rod I fell in with some years ago, and which I considered, I believe, without a rival for a long time, until I was persuaded (though with many misgivings) to order a new one. At least fourteen feet long, and heavy in proportion, I can well remember—now the charm is broken—how I used to blunder on when fishing some little bushy brook with it. It never occurred to me that the many mishaps I met with continually were owing, in nine cases out of ten, to this

most unwieldy instrument. The fly jokes that were poked at me by my young friend, Piscator, who, when I first knew him, was at that age when a rod of a different kind was, I doubt not, introduced to his acquaintance oftener than he liked, could not, I thought, really be at the expense of my favourite. "When ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," you will perhaps exclaim; still I mention all this to caution you, if you value your future comfort, to beware, at starting, of a long heavy rod; for if you are pretty sure to be the same slave as others to the tyrant above-mentioned, there is no reason that I know of why habit should not endear to you the best rod you can procure as well as the worst.

The rod I now use was made by Copham, of Taunton, and as many who have handled it have expressed a wish to have its fellow, I have stronger grounds than habit can furnish for recommending the maker. Though some inches under eleven feet, it will throw as long a line as you are likely to need; and from its being so light and manageable, you can use it to your entire satisfaction, when a longer and heavier one would but lead to your annoyance. An additional pound on the back of a racer, who knows what thousands upon thousands it has lost to the pockets of its unfortunate owner! And though many a long and weary day it has been mine to travel with the big rod, I never feel, now I have discarded it, as I used to feel on the following day—almost entirely reft of strength in my right wrist and shoulder—better, perhaps, you will say, than to be reft of the needful, as in the case above alluded to.

I know I am trespassing on debateable ground when I strongly recommend rather a stiff rod, as well as a light and short one.

The streams you will frequent wind so serpentlike along, that the wind, which is favourable in one spot, you will occasionally find quite the reverse in another; and if you attempt in such an emergency to throw with too flexible a rod, it will be as idle in the result as vexatious to your feelings. I have seldom found the wind so high, (and I have been out in all weathers) that I could not manage to get my flies on the water with the help of a rod not too pliant. Besides this advantage, I can at all times throw a longer line with it, and strike my fish with greater certainty. A light, short, and moderately stiff rod, I can safely recommend from experience.

You will need but little instruction on the subject of your reel and line. The former should be as light as possible; not a multiplier, but furnished with a "*click*," which prevents the undue slackening of the line, and its occasional entanglement; the latter under, never over, thirty yards, I prefer, made entirely of hair. It is light, cheap, quite strong enough, and dries much sooner than when mixed with filk, which is commonly done, and, I am aware, by some preferred.

The price of one of Copham's best rods, inclusive of line and reel, of the above description, will not exceed thirty-five shillings—no ruinous amount, you will agree with me, to invest for your amusement.

You cannot be too particular in the choice of the two

next necessaries I must bring under your notice, viz. gut and hooks. If your gut be inferior, it will cause you the greatest possible inconvenience. Oh! how often the paltry stuff has failed me, when on the eve of landing some mighty monster of the deep! I can conceive nothing more trying to the temper, than such a mishap. Indeed, I have regretted more than once some hasty expression of red-hot anger escaping my lips, when I found how completely all my skill had been thus thrown away. You need scarcely be told that there are rogues in fishing-gear, as well as in grain. Make a point then of never buying gut or anything else at a doubtful shop. Don't be extravagant, but avoid cheapness (if that be the chief recommendation), as you would a gaily-painted but rotten boat in a stormy sea. Let the gut you purchase be always round, and of a soft silky texture; and never think of tying a knot in it without first soaking it well in water. If gut of the best quality be of the utmost importance, not the less so is the kind of hook you select. For many years I thought Limerick hooks unrivalled; but of late I have completely changed my opinion. I still think as before, that no hook sets off a fly so well to the eye, of man at least, if not of a trout, though I profess not to be in the secrets of the latter. The long-tapering shank—what an opportunity it furnishes, O fly-making reader, of delicately moulding the head and fining off the body of the March brawn, large Red-spinner, and May-fly! without mentioning several others of kindred size and shape. In spite of all this, I have discarded the Limerick in favour of the sneck-bent hook, chiefly because

I lose fewer fish with the latter, be the cause what it may. The greatest disadvantage of the sneck-bent hook, viz. shortness of shank, I am rejoiced to find at length corrected. The last sample I bought in London, strange to say, I have in many cases been compelled to shorten.

By all means then, use, if you can procure them, sneck-bent hooks. I almost forgot to tell you that you will require a collar of not less than three yards of gut,\* each knot tied double, and drawn quite tight when the gut has been well soaked. The gut should graduate from a moderate thickness to that of the finest from the top to the bottom. The end fly, called a stretcher, and the second (if you use three flies, which you had better not at first) about two feet and a half from the other.

And now I have brought you thus far through the *dry ordeal* threatened above, I would willingly pass on to subjects more agreeable to me to prate of, and interesting, I trust, to you to hear.† But, a fly-maker, as well as fly-fisher myself, I shall not rest satisfied till I have put you in the readiest way of becoming the same.

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\* Your gut should be stained, to escape the eyes of the fish as much as possible. If you wish it to be of a light-blue colour, all you have to do is to put it into an infusion made by boiling a small quantity of logwood, and a very little copperas, in a pint of rain-water. When the dye is ready, and still hot, put your gut into it for about a quarter of a minute, and it will come out the right colour.

If such a dye be not at hand, you had better soak your gut in very strong green tea, which will impart a colour to it better than the original. Or, the coatings of onions will make a useful dye. Let the gut remain in it when cold, till it assume the shade you require.

† This was written originally just after the Introductory Chapter.

The only complaint I have to bring against some of the authorities on the subject, is the difficult aspect under which the art of fly-making is drawn.

Materials that would take the whole of a long life to collect, furs and feathers that only a favoured few could procure, colours so nicely shaded and delicately interlaced, that none but the lynx-eyes of the veriest connoisseur could detect. Is not all this enough to frighten the youthful aspirant?

I rarely use any other flies than those I fabricate myself; and as I almost invariably take anything that comes to hand, if it approach the right colour, particularly in the case of dubbing, (the material for the body,) much of the fancied difficulty disappears.

The materials you really require are easily obtained, such as the hackles of domestic fowls, (feathers that grow on the neck,) blue and red of various shades, (the most useful,) black, white, &c. Wings of starlings, (indispensable,) snipes, pheasants, partridges, &c. peacocks' and ostriches' herl, that is, the strands of the tail feathers; fur of the hare, rabbit, mole, squirrel, water-rat, &c. and, if you can fall in with a piece of Turkey carpet, put it in your pocket; silks of infinite variety, the finest and strongest you can procure, gold and silver twist, or thread, shoemaker's wax, scissors very sharp at the points, and pliers, will, I believe, nearly complete the list of necessaries. The first friend you catch in the act of tying a fly, watch as a cat does a mouse, though not, of course, with the like murderous intent; ask him every question that will help you in your object; and,

if he resemble his brethren in general, he will not be slow to furnish you, even to repetition, with all the information you require.

In the absence, however, of such an opportunity, I will endeavour to assist you on paper, though I fear I shall not appear to you so lucid as I could wish.

I will commence, then, if you please, by describing how a buzz fly is to be made, that is, a fly without wings (which, by the way, seems rather extraordinary).

Take a hook of the proper size at the bend between the forefinger and thumb of your left hand, with the barb downwards, and the shank extended horizontally ; then make a turn or two in the centre with a piece of well waxed silk ; bite the end of a fine link of gut just to prevent it from slipping, and commence tying the same from the middle of the hook (always, be it remembered, on the under part). When you have reached the top of the shank, take two turns back again, to form the head of the fly.

And now is the time to put in the hackle. Before doing so, however, you must tear off about a third of the feather, or more, as you see fit, at the lower part next the quill, then lay it on the back of the shank (having first with your forefinger and thumb forced back the contrary way as much of the feather as you require), wind the silk a few turns over the stripped part, and fasten off by a mere simple loop, with the end of the silk passed through it, and drawn tight.

Having forced back the hackle, which you left with the underpart uppermost at right angles with the shank,

seize the end of it with your pliers, and commence winding it slowly, and picking out the fibres with a needle if you see them entangled. When all this has been done, force back the reverse way the ends of the fibres you have wound round the hook, and which point naturally towards the barb. This will give you an opportunity to form the body, unincumbered by the feather. The waxed silk you left you must now continue winding down as neatly as possible to the length necessary for the body of the fly. If fur be used, twist a little of it (always in proportion to the body you wish to imitate) on the silk, the latter being of the same colour as the body, and continue winding it up to the hackle, then fasten off as before, with two loops, for security. If a palmer be the order of the day, the body must be made first, over which you can either wind the hackle, commencing as above at the head down to the bend of the hook, and then fasten off with the silk you leave on purpose, or you can tie in the hackle at the bend, work upwards, and then fasten off, and make the head. I usually adopt the first plan. If gold or silver twist be needed, nothing can be easier than to wind, not too close, round the body as much as you want; if for a buzz, after the hackle is wound on, and if for a palmer, before. With no less difficulty can you fasten with the silk, when you first wind it on the hook, two or three fibres of a hackle, as you may require, or of anything you fancy better, to imitate a tail.

In tying a winged fly, I am aware I deviate from

the usual custom, but I have found my plan answer so well, that I shall not apologise for recommending it.

Follow the above directions for making a buzz-fly, with the exception of winding less of the hackle, which is to represent legs, on the hook, and leaving sufficient room for the head at the top of the shank, bare of silk. When this is done, take two or three turns with well-waxed silk round the bare shank and gut, and having stripped off from the appropriate feather just enough of the fibre to form two wings, lay it, without disturbing its natural adherence, on the back of the hook, fasten with two loops, and nip off the roots. In a little time you will be able so to lay one half of the feather over the other at the roots, as to give a more natural and divided appearance to the wings. You will also see that by drawing the silk more or less tight, you can imitate wings that lie flat, or stand up from the body. The wings so tied on are quite independent of the rest of the fly; you can put on new ones at pleasure, or alter them to your fancy, without at all interfering with the hackle.

Varying from those given by others, as some of the above instructions undoubtedly do, you can follow them or not at your pleasure. I believe my method to be one very easily acquired, which is no small recommendation. Another advantage inseparable from it, is, use your fly thus made as long as you please, you will find the dubbing, hackle, and wings never give way. Bitten to pieces by the candidates for the tempting

morsel, it may be, still, as long as there is a vestige of the old material remaining it will cling to the hook.

In proceeding to give a list of flies which, from experience I have found to kill the best, I do not presume to assert that there are not others equally good, or that all I here recommend will kill fish in every river and stream in England. To say that I prefer them myself is, I conceive, the best reason I could advance for advising others to make a trial of them too.

I might have swelled the list to double the size, but I have refrained from doing so from the conviction that when several flies of a different class are on the water, to select the best, and have nothing to do with the remainder, is the wisest plan to adopt.

Although I have given the size of the hooks, which is ascertained by the number, commencing, in the case of the sneck-bent, with the largest, No. 1, and terminating with the smallest, No. 12, it does not follow that it should be strictly adhered to. On the contrary, it must be determined in great measure by the height and colour of the water.

*List of Flies from March to September.*

## MARCH.

1. *February Red*.—Still on the water. Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat, of a dark drake's feather. Body of a red sheepskin mat, or the dark red part of squirrel's fur; legs, a red hackle.

2. *Large Dark Blue*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings upright, of a starling's wing feather, not too light; body, of mole's and mouse's fur, slightly tinged with yellow; legs, a dark blue hackle; tail, two strands of a dark blue hackle.

3. *Cockwing Blue*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of a starling's wing feather; body, of squirrel's blue fur mixed with yellow, either floss silk or mohair, and tied with yellow silk; legs, a lightish blue hen's hackle; tail, two strands of a blue cock's hackle.

4. *March Brown*.—Hook, No. 8. Wings upright, of a woodcock's or pheasant's wing feather, or mottled feather from a partridge's tail; body, of brown sable fur, ribbed with yellow silk, or the fur of a hare's ear; legs, feather from a partridge's back; tail, two strands of a hen-pheasant's or partridge's tail.

5. *Small Red Spinner*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of a starling's wing feather; body, reddish brown silk, ribbed with the finest gold thread; legs, a red hen's hackle; tail, two strands from a red cock's hackle.

6. *Red Palmer*.—Hook, No. 8 or 9. Body, peacock's

herl, ribbed with gold twist, or not, according to fancy'; legs, a red hackle. Though not a fly, this caterpillar will kill well early in the season, more especially when the water is stained.

### APRIL.

7. Most of the previous flies.
8. *Sand Fly*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat, and very full, of a landrail's wing feather; body, of the sand-coloured fur of a hare's neck; legs, a ginger hackle.
9. *Great Red Spinner*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings upright, of a starling's wing feather; body, of reddish brown silk ribbed with gold thread, or of peacock's herl stripped, and ribbed with fine yellow silk; legs, a red hackle; tail, two strands of a red cock's hackle.
10. *Stone Fly*.—Hook, No. 6, very long in the shank. Wings to lie quite flat and longer than the body, of two small grizzled cock's hackles, or of a dark mottled pheasant's wing feather, or woodcock's, well shaded; body, of brown sable fur, well mixed with yellow, towards the tail especially; legs, a grizzled cock's hackle; tail, two strands from a partridge's tail feather; horns, if used, two short rabbit whiskers.
11. *Gravel Bed, or Spider*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings to lie flat, of a woodcock's wing feather; body, of lead-coloured silk; legs, a black hackle, long in the fibre, and wound twice round the body. A killer in warm days.
12. *Grannam, or Green tail*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat and full, of a partridge's or hen-pheasant's

wing feather ; body, dark fur from a hare's ear tied with brown silk, with a little green silk at the tail, to imitate the bunch of eggs there ; legs, pale ginger hen's hackle. Made buzz with a hackle from a partridge's neck on the same body.

13. *Yellow Dun*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of a light starling's wing feather, or snipe's ; body, yellow silk, well waxed, to tone it down, or very light-blue fur ribbed with yellow silk ; legs, very fine light-blue hackle ; tail, two strands from a light-blue cock's hackle. Made buzz with a light-blue hackle on the same body.

#### MAY.

14. Many of the preceding flies.

15. *Iron Blue*.—Hook, No. 11. Wings upright, of a tomtit's tail or wing feather, or hen blackbird's ; body, mole's fur mixed with a little yellow floss silk, or a paler fur ribbed with purple silk ; legs, small yellowish dun hackle ; tail, forked, two strands of a yellow dun hackle. A difficult fly to imitate, but very murderous in a cold stormy day.

16. *Black Gnat*.—Hook, No. 11. Wings to lie flat, short and very full, of a starling's wing feather ; body, black ostrich herl, short and thick ; legs, fine black hackle. Buzz, a light dun hackle on the same body.

17. *Downbill*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat, of a woodcock's wing feather ; body, orange silk tied with ash-coloured silk, the latter showing most towards the tail and under the wings ; legs, a furnace hackle. A good fly in windy weather.

18. *Fern Fly, Sailor and Soldier*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat, for the sailor, of a heron's wing feather; for the soldier, of a red hen's feather, or the darkest part of a starling's wing; body, orange silk; legs, a red hackle. Buzz, a furnace hackle on the same body.

19. *Alder*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat, of a woodcock's wing feather, or mottled feather of a cock pheasant; body, peacock's herl, or copper-coloured silk, some prefer mulberry; legs, a blue hackle, almost black. Buzz, black or blue hackle on peacock herl body.

20. *Black Palmer*. Hook, No. 8 or 9; body, black ostrich's herl ribbed with silver twist; legs, black, or blood-red hackle; not a fly, but a caterpillar.

## JUNE.

21. *Green Drake*.—Hook, No. 6 or 7. Wings upright and full, of a drake's feather stained yellow;\* body, yellow silk, waxed a little, to give it a mottled appearance; legs, a gray partridge hackle stained a yellowish colour; tail, three long strands of a black hackle, or anything you can get. Buzz, a drake's feather stained yellow on the same body.

22. *Gray Drake*.—Hook, No. 6 or 7. Wings up-

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\* To stain feathers yellow, boil some scrapings of the bark of the barberry-tree, or root, and a small quantity of alum, in a pint of rain-water, with as many drake's feathers as you require, for about an hour, and you will find the latter of the right colour. Or, boil the above in an infusion of alum, fustic, and a little copperas, and they will acquire the proper tint.

right and full, of a drake's gray feather ; body, French-white silk, or white ostrich herl, ribbed with dark brown silk ; legs, a grizzled cock's hackle ; tail, three long strands of a black cock's hackle.

23. *Marlow Buzz, or Cochabonddu.*—Hook, No. 9 or 10. Body, peacock's herl, or that and ostrich herl mixed, ribbed with gold twist ; legs, red hackle with a black butt wound round the body, but not all the way down, like a palmer.

24. *White Moth.*—Hook, No. 7. Wings to lie flat and very full, of any white feather ; body, white ostrich herl ; legs, white hackle. Useful at the end of the month and beginning of July, in the dusk of the evening.

## JULY.

25. *Sky Blue.*—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of a light feather of a starling's wing, stained pale yellow ; body, pale blue fur, mixed with yellow mohair ; legs, pale dun hackle ; tail, two strands of a pale blue hackle. Useful towards the evening, when the water is fine, especially in the Wye.

26. *Wren Tail.*—Hook, No. 11. Body, light brown fable, ribbed with very fine gold thread ; legs and wings, made buzz of a wren's tail feather. Good in the middle of a hot summer's day.

27. *July Dun.*—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of the dark part of a starling's wing feather ; body, mole's fur mixed with yellow mohair, and spun on yellow silk ; legs, dark-blue hackle ; tail, three strands of a dark-blue hackle.

28. *Partridge Hackle*.—Hook, No. 9. Body, light-brown fable, ribbed with gold thread; legs and wings, partridge's back feather.

### AUGUST.

29. *Red Ant*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings to lie flat, of a starling's wing feather; body, peacock's herl, stripped just below the wings to near the tail; legs, a red hackle. This fly sometimes appears in the middle of the previous month.

30. *August Dun*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of a brown hen's wing feather; body, brown silk, ribbed with yellow; legs, grizzled hackle, brownish, if it can be obtained, or red hackle stained brown; \* tail, two strands of a grizzled hackle.

31. *Orange Fly*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of the dark part of a starling's wing feather; body, orange floss silk tied with dark silk; legs, a furnace hackle. A killer.

32. *Cinnamon Fly*.—Hook, No. 9. Wings to lie flat and full, of the darkest part of a landrail's wing feather; body, fawn-coloured silk; legs; ginger hackle.

### SEPTEMBER.

33. *Whirling Blue*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings upright, of a starling's wing feather; body, squirrel's red, brown

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\* If you boil some red hackles in a pint of water with a piece of copperas as large as a marble, sufficiently long, they will come out a good brown colour.

fur, mixed with yellow mohair, and spun on yellow silk ; legs, a red hackle ; tail, two strands of a red hackle.

34. *Willow Fly*.—Hook, No. 10. Wings to lie flat, of a pale brown hen's wing feather, and later in the season, of a starling's feather ; body, mole's fur ribbed with yellow silk, or fine gold thread ; legs, a dark grizzled hackle. Equally good, if not better, without wings, and made buzz.

35. *Pale Blue*.—Hook, No. 11. Wings of a sea-swallow's feather ; body, the finest pale blue fur mixed with yellow mohair, and tied with pale yellow silk ; legs, the palest blue hackle that can be got.

In describing the materials to be used for the flies above enumerated, (more especially as regards their bodies,) I have done it more as a guide to the proper colour, than with the view of laying down a rule that cannot be deviated from. Imitation being the object in view, it is very possible that the beginner may, by his own ingenuity, discover something altogether different in its nature from what has hitherto been used, that would far better promote the desired end. At any rate, he need not distress himself, if any of the materials above-mentioned should fail him at the moment he most requires them, as almost any substitute that approaches the right colour will answer in their room. I should remark, that when I have directed the bodies of flies to be made of *silk*, I mean, in most cases, not *floss-silk*, which is generally used, but silk unravelled, as I have always found it to fit so much better. One exception to this I adopt in the case of the body of the

green-drake, which I make with yellow silk in its original state, slightly waxed, as I consider it to look more natural.

When it is possible, the mixture of a little mohair with the different furs you use, you will find useful in preventing them from becoming too much saturated with moisture.

**FINIS.**









